

**WHEN WOODY MET HARRY**  
Deconstructing adultery: Why do men do it?  
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**NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE**  
The secrets of the beauty business  
MAGAZINE



**THE WINE MYSTIQUE UNCORKED**  
How to tell a good bottle from bad  
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**DALGLISH GOES ON A CHARM OFFENSIVE**  
The other side of Newcastle's Mr Dour  
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# THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Saturday 2 May 1998 70p (IR70p) No 3,600

Today's news

## Policeman guilty of rape

A CLEVELAND police officer was yesterday found guilty of two rapes and one indecent assault. John Blott, 33, was also cleared of three charges of indecent assault after more than five hours of deliberation by the jury. He was remanded in custody until 15 May when pre-sentence reports will be submitted.

Page 3

## Minister accused of expenses fiddle

Helen Liddell, the treasury minister, was under police investigation yesterday after an allegation of irregularities in her election expenses. The allegation concerned an undeclared donation. However, figures released by Labour yesterday showed that she had spent £4,572 on her campaign against a limit of £7,000.

Page 4

## Sacking apology

THERESA Harrild, who won a sexual discrimination case against the English Cricket Board, has received an apology and "substantial sum", it was announced yesterday. The former Lord's receptionist won an industrial tribunal in March claiming she had been sacked after being forced to terminate her pregnancy.

Page 6

## 'Sue doctors' move

WOMEN who suffer illness or mental trauma after an abortion are to be encouraged to sue the doctors responsible for allowing the operation. Anti-abortion group Life said yesterday that it was setting up a free phone line to give women advice on their legal rights and persuade them to go to court in a new campaign to deter mothers-to-be from ending their pregnancies.

Page 7

## Beetlemania's back

WITH its new Beetle, VW is striking gold. Beetlemania is upon the United States. For reasons that can only be guessed at – nostalgia for the old beetle of the Seventies, its look that is still bulbous but also sleek, or VW's inspired advertising campaign – the new Beetle is as sought-after in the US as the Viagra potency pill. It is so hot, there is already a black market for them.

Page 13

## New slave trade

SLAVERY is emerging as an economic fact and a human outrage in the country that once followed Lenin but has now turned to building capitalism. It has been well known for some time that the Russian mafia tricks Slav women into slavery with the promise of lucrative work abroad.

Now the same technique is being used on the territory of the former Soviet Union and is affecting not only prostitutes but also workers in a wide range of other industries.

Page 10

## Business news

### Industrial gloom

FRESH evidence of a downturn in manufacturing has all but ruled out a rise in interest rates next week. In the second gloomy survey of industry this week, the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply said manufacturing activity declined in April for the first time in almost two years.

Page 22

## Sports news

### Wenger's weekend

ARSENÉ Wenger, Arsenal's manager, is managing to retain an air of calm, despite facing the most important weekend of his season without a Footballeer of the Year Dennis Bergkamp. Arsenal know that victory in tomorrow's against Everton will bring them the Premiership title.

Page 22

## Brown puts weight behind euro

By Colin Brown  
in Brussels

GORDON BROWN last night tried to stop international markets driving the pound to a new high on the eve of the historic launch of the euro, with reassurances that the single European currency would be a success for Britain's membership.

The Chancellor raised the prospects of Britain joining the euro early in the new millennium and came as Tony Blair made last minute efforts to stop the launch of the new currency being marred by a row over the presidency of the European Central Bank (ECB).

"I am confident that progress has been made in all the areas that

Jacques Santer, the president of the European Commission, declared it was no longer "if but when" Britain would join the euro. Mr Brown emphasised that Britain would not "take a leap in the dark" but the euro's success as a hard currency would meet one of the key tests for Britain's membership.

The Chancellor described it as "the opening of a new chapter for Europe" but he said it was only the beginning because the EU had a high level objective of long-term stability on which economic success depends.

The agreement of 11, led by France and Germany, at a heads of government summit today is a foregone conclusion and was due to be given final approval after a meeting of European finance

council ministers (Ecofin) last night in Brussels.

As he arrived, Mr Brown said: "I heard politicians saying only a year ago this could never happen, that today's events were impossible. I think there has been remarkable progress in Europe in achieving budget discipline and greater long-term stability with economic reform."

The Chancellor said there was an agreement in Europe on Britain's agenda for creating employment and securing jobs – underlining his confidence that the single currency will provide the economic benefits that Britain will require before joining after a referendum, which he promised would be early in the next Parliament.

The Prime Minister flew to The Hague last night for talks with Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, in a last minute effort to broker a deal between France and Germany over their rival candidates for the ECB. Mr Blair spoke to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Jacques Chirac and may speak to Mr Kok again today but was said by Mr Brown to be making progress in seeking acceptance for Germany's preferred choice, Wim Duisenberg, the Dutch president of the European Monetary

Institute, in the face of tough French bargaining for their candidate, Jean Claude Trichet, governor of the Bank of France.

British ministers said the rules requiring an eight-year term could not be broken but a compromise was being negotiated possibly to allow Mr Duisenberg to retire after four years, leaving the French a four-year share.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "We think we can make progress, we think we can broker an agreement that will satisfy the requirements of the [Maastricht] treaty but it does remain difficult."

Blair campaign, page 12

## May ball's abridged version

A STUDENT being carried over Magdalen Bridge in Oxford yesterday after the traditional May Day gathering to hear the choir sing from the top of Magdalen College tower, writes Liam Grigorian.

Police concerned about the strong currents in the River Cherwell had earlier shut the bridge to stop inebriated students jumping in, a May Day pastime that has also become a matter of concern to local authorities and welfare officers.

The heavy police presence failed to discourage a motley assortment of bedraggled ball-goers, bemused tourists and early rising locals from assembling before first light.

There were fears that some would try to force the police cordon but only one dinner-jacketed student toyed briefly with the idea of a dash through the lines until one of his group shouted: "Who wants to jump in the river, anyway? Let's go to the pub."

Photograph: Tom Pilson

## Paper pays for killer's memoirs

By Ian Birrell  
Home Affairs Correspondent

THE memoirs of a former IRA terrorist, who has admitted at least two murders and was given two life sentences, are to be serialised in a national newspaper later this month. The revelation will fuel the controversy over convicted killer profiting from books about their crimes.

The Prime Minister yesterday went on television to reiterate his concern that child-killer Mary Bell had made money from a book about her life. "I still think it is wrong that people make money out of crimes they have committed," Tony Blair said.

The *Independent* has learnt that the memoirs of reformed IRA

leader Sean O'Callaghan are to be serialised later this month in the *Daily Telegraph*. His book, titled *The Informer*, earned him a large advance, reported to be £175,000, from Transworld Publishers.

Mr O'Callaghan, 42, a former Sinn Fein councillor who joined the IRA at 15, pleaded guilty in 1990 to murdering Peter Flanagan, a Royal Ulster Constabulary detective, and Eva Martin, an Ulster Defence Regiment soldier, in 1974.

After the killings, he changed his view of the IRA and became a valuable informer for the Garda. Since his release from prison, after serving only eight years of his sentence, he has campaigned for peace and become a respected authority on Northern Ireland affairs. Mr O'Callaghan was this week

arrested by the Garda in Dublin and questioned about matters, including the death of John Corcoran an IRA man and Garda informant, murdered in 1985. He was yesterday freed without charge.

Transworld issued a statement yesterday describing Mr O'Callaghan as "an authority on the IRA and a working journalist" who had spent 20 years "working ceaselessly to destroy terrorism".

His agent, Bill Hamilton, said: "He's a man who risked his life under the most dangerous circumstances to subvert terrorism and then handed himself in to prison in order to pay his debts."

Confirming that the *Daily Telegraph* would be serialising the book this month, he said Mr O'Callaghan would be "coming ab-

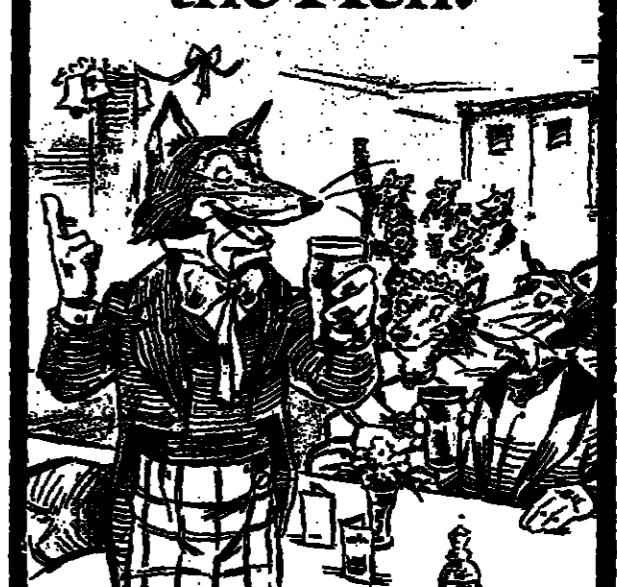
solutely clean" about his killings and his role in the IRA.

The *Daily Telegraph* refused to comment. Earlier this week its editor, Charles Moore, wrote an article entitled: "Why we refused to serialise the story of Mary Bell." He wrote that Bell had not received any pardon for her crimes and "remains guilty".

Instead the book, *Cries Unheard*, was published by the *Times*, which paid £40,000 for the serialisation rights. The author, Gitta Sereny paid Bell a sum, which unconfirmed reports put at £50,000, for her collaboration in the project.

Yesterday the Attorney General, John Morris, said that after two days of investigation he could find no redress in the law for ordering Bell to repay the money.

## "I say we toast the Hen."



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## Bonanza for 'club clique' as RAC is sold off

By Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

THE ROYAL Automobile Club, Britain's oldest motoring organisation, is to be sold to an American company for £450m. And four MPs are among a "club clique" of RAC members set to receive a £35,000 windfall from the sale.

The proposed buy-out must be approved by the 12,000 members of the RAC's plush Pall Mall club in a meeting next month. Among this exclusive group are Tory MPs Shaun Woodward and Peter Luff as well as the president of the Liberal Democrats Robert Maclean and Labour MP Derek Wyatt, a former BSkyB executive.

Anybody rushing to "carpehag" is too late – even if they could get in. There is a six-month waiting list to use the Pall Mall facilities – believed to have the best Turkish baths in London – and a prospective member needs to be "recommended" by two current club users.

But under its two-tier membership structure the four "members" of the rescue service – who contribute the bulk of the RAC's profits – will not benefit and do not need to be consulted about the sale.

Contacted by *The Independent*, the MPs described the payments as "quite incredible". "I have done nothing to earn this. I find it all very doubtful," said Mr Maclean, MP for Caithness, Sutherland and

Easter Ross. "I have been a member of the club for about 10 years. Simply because it has a good swimming pool." Sean Woodward, MP for Witney and former director of communications, also joined for the "pool". "I have no objection to the demutualisation. What I want is the club to work," he said.

Others set to receive the cash bonuses are designer Paul Smith, former Formula One champion Damon Hill and journalist Sir Robin Day.

The RAC board has been canvassing support for a switch from its mutual status. It has already received 6,700 replies from full members, of which "more than 90 per cent have been supportive". The sale is likely to go ahead later this year, after a formal show of hands at a meeting in June.

Cendant, virtually unheard of in the UK, has just bought up the third largest motoring organisation, Green Flag. Its 3m members and the RAC's 5.8m will make the new motororing support service almost equal in size to the AA.

IN TOMORROW'S  
INDEPENDENT  
ON SUNDAY

■ Keep taking  
the tablets:  
How the drugs  
industry has  
lobotomised a  
generation

■ Mid-life Kureishi:  
A new novel, movie  
and girlfriend for  
the buddha of  
suburbia

■ Dancing in  
the street:  
South African  
fashion from  
Cape Town

IN MONDAY'S  
INDEPENDENT

■ Conversations  
with a lapsed  
heretic: Deborah  
Ross meets  
Chief Rabbi  
Dr Jonathan Sacks

■ Bigger but are  
they better? Game  
shows and their  
million pound  
prizes

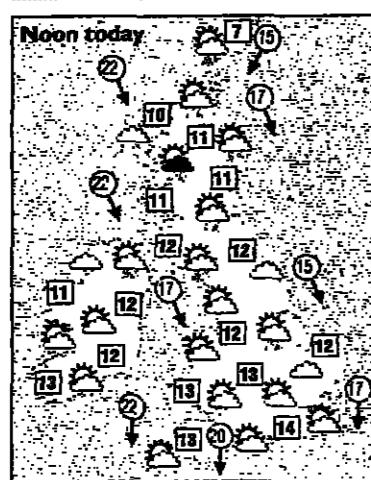
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Recycled paper made up  
41.4% of the raw material for  
UK newspapers in the  
first half of 1997.

WEATHER



British Isles weather

most recent available figures for noon local time  
C: cloudy; C+: clear; F: fog; H: haze; M: mist; R: rain;  
S: snow; S+: sleet; Sh: showers; Sn: snow; Th: thunder

Location	Condition	Temperature
Aberdeen	F 12.34	Guernsey C 10.50
Aberystwyth	F 11.52	Inverness S 11.52
Ay	F 12.54	Ipswich R 8.46
Belfast	F 13.55	Isles of Scilly 12.54
Birmingham	G 13.55	Jersey C 9.48
Blackpool	F 11.52	Liverpool F 12.54
Bournemouth	C 10.50	London D 9.48
Brighton	C 9.48	Manchester C 12.54
Bristol	R 11.52	Newcastle C 11.52
Cardiff	C 13.55	Oxford C 9.48
Carlisle	F 13.55	Plymouth S 14.57
Bever	D 9.48	Scarborough C 9.48
Dublin	F 13.55	Southampton C 10.50
Edinburgh	S 13.55	Sheffield D 9.48
Exeter	F 15.59	Stornoway C 9.48
Glasgow	F 13.55	Tor C 10.50

Outlook for the next few days

There will be quite a lot of cloud around but some sunny spells are also likely to develop and most parts will stay dry with the exception of a little rain in northwest Scotland. Over the coming week we will continue to see a lot of cloud with bands of mainly light rain moving across the UK, but there will be some sunshine between these spells of rain. Temperatures will be near or slightly below the average for early May.

Air quality

Yesterday      Outlook for today

	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>
London	Moderate	London	Moderate
Paris	Low	Low	Low
Paris	Low	Low	Low
Paris	Low	Low	Low

Lighting-up times

	Sun rises	Moon sets	First quarter
London	05.31	01.41	05.31
London	02.28	01.41	02.28

Hague at a Labour Day event organised by the Dutch Prime Minister, Wim Kok. Before leaving, he gave an anniversary television interview in which he confided that his true "passions" were hospitals and schools. There had been a "good start but there's a lot more to do".

The Conservatives toned down their own anniversary bash, presumably to chime with Labour's low-key approach. A press conference originally billed as starring William Hague promised an opportunity to

help the Government "blow out their candles". It was actually fronted by Peter Lilley, shadow chancellor, and Francis Maude, shadow culture minister. For a moment it seemed they might expose clandestine revelling in Labour ranks. But it turned out that when Mr Maude said he had 40 examples of ministers "up to their neck in the trough," he meant power had gone to Labour's head. No, the Conservatives were clearly as disappointed as the rest of the country.

Man of the moment, page 17

## Ahern lays down law on IRA weapons

By Alan Murdoch  
in Dublin

either government or any party, "or the erection of new or old preconditions".

At a private meeting later, Mr Ahern is believed to have told Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams of his anger at the IRA statement. Under the agreement all parties agree to "work constructively and in good faith to achieve decommissioning all arms within two years".

Launching his Fianna Fail party's campaign for a "yes"

vote in the 22 May Northern Ireland Agreement referendum, Mr Ahern repudiated IRA claims that the poll did not amount to an act of national self-determination. To encourage purely peaceful moves to unification by consent, he said the option of "a further act of self-determination at a future date" remained.

He pointedly criticised the British Army's continuing high profile in South Armagh, saying

it was unfortunate, nearly 12 months into a ceasefire, that people there "should still be treated as if they were living in occupied territory". He said it contributed nothing to the peace that they were facing "unacceptable" levels of harassment within a landscape where the numerous watchtowers were "reminiscent of the former Iron Curtain countryside".

Rejecting hard-line republican opposition to the peace

process, Mr Ahern said no one could presume the hunger striker Bobby Sands would have opposed the peace initiatives of republican leaders today.

This was aimed at Sinn Fein dissidents led by Mr Sands' sister, Bernadette Sands-McKevitt. Urging armed groups "to accept that the war is over," he cited the recent disbanding of the German Red Army Faction.

"Fundamentalism is sterile and

leads nowhere except to pointless grief," he said.

The chairman of the multi-party Stormont talks, former US senator George Mitchell, said yesterday that the IRA's stance came as no surprise. "That has been their position all along." A time-frame lay within the Agreement for dealing with arms, and people should not be deterred by such statements. Mr Mitchell was in Dublin to receive a honorary

Doctor of Laws degree from Trinity College university.

■ South African government ministers Mac Maharaj and Matthews Phosa, of the ANC, yesterday joined Sinn Fein vice-president Pat Doherty and executive member Martin Ferris, a former gun-runner, in discussing peace processes in both countries with republican inmates at Portalois Prison. Similar discussions were held at the Maze Prison, near Belfast, on Wednesday.

## Cygnets signals start of summer

By Kate Watson-Smyth

THE weather phenomenon known as El Nino has been blamed for leaving a trail of destruction around the world, but in a small corner of rural England it has been responsible for one happy occasion.

One of the 1,000 swans kept at Abbotsbury Swannery, near Weymouth in Dorset, has hatched the earliest cygnet born there for 600 years.

The mild weather caused by El Nino caused the cygnet to break out of his shell four weeks early.

John Houston, of the Sub-Tropical Gardens nearby, said: "The first baby swan of the year is always eagerly awaited in Dorset, as local tradition says it signals the start of summer."

Elsewhere the bank holiday weekend looks set to be cloudy and overcast.

A spokesman for the Met Office said there would be some sunshine in the central and southern regions but showers were expected. "Temperatures will be average for the time of year – around 12 or 13C – but on the whole it will be pretty nondescript," he said.

For those heading abroad, Heathrow airport was handling 147,000 passengers on Saturday and 155,000 on Sunday, with New York, Amsterdam, Dublin, Paris and Edinburgh the main destinations.



Photograph: Neville Elder

## Labour celebrates without style

By Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

AS a news event, Labour's first anniversary rated the headline: "Small celebration somewhere in the North. Not many drunk". In a frenzy of anti-triumphalism, Tony Blair's minders decreed that the highlight of his day should be a meeting with readers of regional newspapers. "I can't see in his diary an opportunity for champagne," a spokesman noted. Mr Blair spent the day working in Down-

ing Street, breaking only to meet winners of a newspaper competition. The only liquid refreshment was tea.

The party was riding high in the polls and there was plenty to celebrate. But the nearest thing to an anniversary bash was dinner in Newcastle, hosted by Mr Mowlam and featuring Peter Mandelson as after-dinner speaker. A spokesman said the dinner was an annual event and did not constitute an official commemoration of last year's victory.

Mr Blair spent the evening in The

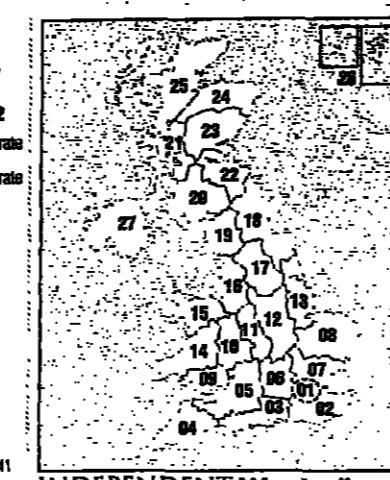
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Man of the moment, page 17



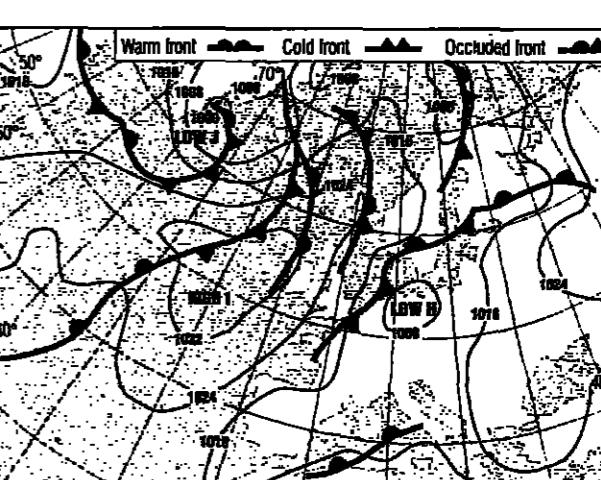
INDEPENDENT Weatherline

most recent available figures for noon local time  
C: cloudy; C+: clear; F: fog; H: haze; M: mist; R: rain;  
S: snow; S+: sleet; Sh: showers; Sn: snow; Th: thunder



World weather

most recent available figures for noon local time  
C: cloudy; C+: clear; F: fog; H: haze; M: mist; R: rain;  
S: snow; S+: sleet; Sh: showers; Sn: snow; Th: thunder



Atlantic chart, noon today

Low I will move north-easterly. Low J will travel eastwards maintaining central pressure. High I will stay in situ and intensify slightly.

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## A club whose name is worth £450m

By Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

THE remarkable rise and rise of the RAC continued yesterday. Founded by the prolific inventor Frederick Simms more than a century ago, it has risen to become a distinctly British marque at the end of the millennium. It is for its "brand" that US concern Cendant paid £450m. The American giant only last month gobbled up Britain's car parking empire and the nation's third largest motoring organisation Green Flag. Putting these elements together, Cendant will have now nearly more than 45 per cent of the breakdown market.

Industry insiders said the RAC sale was likely to be referred to the Office for Fair Trading as it would see two entities - the new RAC and AA - holding more than 90 per cent of the market.

What many will also bemoan is the loss of another great British institution. Taking its cue from the conversion of major building societies to banks, the RAC decided to sell up. The reason, say its managers, is that it will be able to fund ambitious plans.

Executives at the RAC have long been concerned that the motoring organisation would not have the money to invest in new technology - such as electronic mapping - that it would need in the near future. As the motoring organisation makes only £1m profit on £250m of sales, its executives were never likely to be able to realise their dreams.

So feelers were put out 28 months ago - the proposed sale attracted much interest. More than 20 bidders from the UK and overseas expressed desire. But none could match the £450m laid on the table by Cendant.

When the RAC's motoring services pass into American hands, 12,000 full members of the club will get windfall payments of up to £35,000.



The RAC has come a long way since the 1950s (above) and life members now include Peter Luff MP (below left) and Richard Wilson

This nearly doubles the amount on offer from Jeffrey Rose, the RAC's former chairman. His final act was to write to all the full members saying that "professional advisers" had valued the stakes at "a sum of £20,000".

None of this will be of concern to the 5.8m members of the RAC's breakdown service - who will get nothing in cash.

Full members of the club, for a £260 signing-on fee and another £600 a year, can swim in the central London RAC club or play golf at Woodcote Park country club, near Epsom, Surrey.

Under the board's plan they will see a 2.800 per cent increase in their investment.

Among members expecting a windfall from the proposed takeover

are motor racing champion Nigel Mansell and the actor Richard Wilson.

The RAC insisted that its name would carry on and that there would be improved services - but no extra cash.

Members of the Pall Mall club will vote on the deal at the company's annual meeting next month and it is hoped the acquisition will be concluded by the end of the summer.

The Queen is the patron of the RAC, while the president is Prince Michael of Kent. Other full members include the gossip columnist Nigel Dempster, the former British Leyland car company chief Sir Michael Edwards and the former motor racing superstar Stirling Moss.



## Demon of the Internet cashes in his chips to make £33m fortune

IN THE NEWS  
CLIFF STANFORD

CLIFF Stanford has two passions: playing on the Internet and making money. After selling his company, Demon, he now has bagfuls of the latter - £33m, to be precise - and plenty of time to indulge in the former, writes Kathy Marks.

Demon, for those readers unacquainted with the key players in cyberspace, is Britain's largest provider of Internet access. Mr Stanford founded it in 1992 with £20,000 and sold it to Scottish Telecom yesterday for £66m, pocketing half himself.

Despite building a fortune on the back of the anorak brigade, Mr Stanford, 44, is clearly not just a computer nerd. He has a flair for business and a head for figures; he learnt book-keeping from his mother at the age of 10 and started out as an accountant.

But the key to Demon's success is the prescience with which, in the early 1990s, he anticipated the extraordinary explosion in demand for the Internet, hitherto the preserve of academics.

It was Mr Stanford's establishment of the first low-cost dial-up service - subscribers were offered access for just £10 a



Cliff Stanford: 'I like having money but it would be no fun to win it on the pools'

month - that democratised the Net, opening it up to a whole generation of "techies". Operating out of cramped offices in north London, Demon had 1,000 subscribers within six months.

Mr Stanford grew up in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, where he helped his mother out with her book-keeping jobs and was running payrolls by the age of 15.

His entrepreneurial skills were apparent early on. At 14, when he was selling local newspapers as a part-time job, he

devised a marketing scheme that would enable him to win a competition to sell the largest number of copies.

He joined a Billericay accountancy firm after leaving school, but quit in 1983 to found a computer programming company, Impetus. Sadly, reports that he worked out of the boiler room of his local cinema in Southend are apocryphal.

Mr Stanford, who set up Demon with Giles Todd, the former technical director, has always been explicit about the motives that drive him: to make as much money as possible as quickly as possible.

So is £33m enough to be getting on with? "There's no such thing as enough money," he said yesterday. "I like having money in my pocket, I like buying nice things. But it would be no fun to win it on the football pools. The thrill for me is to make it through big successful business deals."

Mr Stanford, who is married with an 11-year-old son, is in no hurry to spend his new-found wealth. He has treated himself to a Saab convertible, but has no other plans to splash out. Nor is he about to rest on his laurels. He has another business venture up his sleeve, soon to be announced. But he hopes to have more free time now that Demon is off his hands. "For the last six years, my hobbies have been the Internet, the Internet and the Internet," he said. "Now at least I might get the chance to play on it again."

Business, page 22

## New-found galaxy is oldest ever seen

By Charles Arthur  
Science and Technology Editor

A NEWLY discovered galaxy has given astronomers a look back to a time when the universe was less than 800 million years old - making it the oldest and most distant object ever seen.

In finding the scientists, including Dr Richard McMahon from Cambridge University, have displaced the previous record-holder just six weeks after it was discovered.

But Dr McMahon also hinted that his team could be on the verge of discovering many more such "infant" galaxies from the edge of time. He told the journal *Science News* that "we have

a technique for searching for distant galaxies ... We're in new territory here."

Mark Dickinson, at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, said: "It's quite plausible that some of these [galaxies] are young objects that are going off for the first time and making stars."

Such early starbirth could have key lessons for scientists. Esther Hu, of the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, said: "As any mother could tell you, a year's growth makes a much bigger difference in a toddler than in someone aged 20."

The newly-found galaxy lies some 12.3 billion light years

from the Earth. From that distance, its light would have started travelling towards us when the universe was less than 800 million years old - about one-fourteenth of its present age, generally estimated at around 13 billion years.

The astronomers discovered it by the "red shift" of its light - the amount of stretching in the wavelengths, caused by the ongoing expansion of the universe.

With everything in the universe moving away from everything else, the impetus from the Big Bang makes space expand, the size of the red shift being the key element in measuring absolute distance.

The latest sighting was made with one of the two 10-metre twin Keck telescopes on Mount Mauna Kea, Hawaii, the world's most powerful optical observatory.

The new galaxy's age, dating from about 60 million years earlier in cosmic history than the previous record holder, a galaxy found by another team in March, could hold significant information for astronomers. Full details of the discovery are to be published in the journal *Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

The astronomers found the galaxy by looking for a particular type of high-energy radiation emitted by hydrogen atoms as massive stars form.



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# Police investigate minister's expenses

By Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

HELEN LIDDELL, the Treasury minister, was under police investigation yesterday after an allegation of irregularities in her election expenses. However, it seemed highly unlikely that any charges would be brought.

The allegation concerned a donation made to Ms Liddell's Airdrie and Shotts constituency party which was not mentioned on her expense return after the 1997 general election. Labour sources suggested there was no need to mention it because it was not given during the election campaign.

Figures released by Labour yesterday showed that the MP, who has been tipped for promotion to the cabinet, spent £4,572 on her campaign against a limit of £7,000.

Patrick Moran, a former local party treasurer who was recently vot-

ed out of office, claimed a £400 cheque from the shop workers' union Usdaw and an individual donation of £10 were undeclared by Mrs Liddell's agent Karen Turnbull when the return was filed.

Last night, the Labour Party dismissed the allegation and said it was confident the police would take the matter no further.

A Labour source said: "There's no question of irregularity. The party is entirely confident there is nothing in the unfounded and minor allegations made by a single individual who has an axe to grind."

Yesterday's development was the second such embarrassment for Labour. Last week, the Labour MP for Newark, Fiona Jones, was charged under the Representation of the People Act with filing inaccurate returns on her election expenses.

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Party, her Airdrie and Shotts constituency was at the centre of controversy over allegations of sleaze in Monklands District Council. She took a strong stance against corruption.

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Opposition politicians used the new allegation as proof that there was still internal strife among Labour members in the Monklands area. A spokesman for the Scottish National Party said: "This is an extremely serious allegation."

"Labour has been in trouble in many areas of the Central Belt throughout the last year and this may be more of the same."



Canvas of opinion: The final day of judging in London yesterday for the 1998 BP Portrait Award. Top prize is £10,000 and the best of the 600 entries will be exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery, which organises the event

Photograph: Andrew Burnham

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## Irish terror suspect is shot

A SUSPECTED member of a dissident hardline Irish republican group was shot and injured by police last night during an attempted raid on a security van in the Irish Republic.

The shooting followed a police surveillance operation in Co Wicklow and first reports said the shot man was seriously hurt.

Five men were arrested after the incident and police recovered a number of weapons, including a rocket launcher.

Also found at the scene was an assault rifle and two handguns.

The gunmen were understood to have set up a roadblock near Ashford on the main Wicklow-Dublin road in a bid to hold up a security van transporting cash. They were confronted by armed police and there was an exchange of fire, during which one of the raiders was hit. No police officers were injured.

## Fashanu hunted by police

JUSTIN FASHANU, the former footballer, is being hunted by the police in the United States after being charged with sexually assaulting a 17-year-old male student.

The teenager claims he woke up in bed after a drinking session to find the footballer allegedly performing a sex act.

Fashanu was questioned and charged but when officers later went to search his flat in Ellicott City, Maryland, they discovered he had left with his clothes and personal belongings, a Howard County police spokesman said. Mr Fashanu moved to Maryland earlier this year to coach with the former Maryland Maryland Maryland football team. The alleged incident happened on 25 March.

## Escaped paedophile caught

A PAEDOPHILE who was on the loose for almost 48 hours after slipping away from two guards during an escorted trip to a swimming pool was recaptured by police yesterday.

David Marker, 62, disappeared from the Abraham Moss leisure centre in Crumpsall, Manchester, on Wednesday. But a police patrol spotted him in the Urmston area yesterday morning and he was being held at a police station somewhere in Greater Manchester, awaiting an escorted transfer to Stockton Hall Mental Health Hospital, York.

The Department of Health said the private hostel which arranged Marker's visit to the pool would now be expected to review its procedures and prepare a report into the incident.

## Welsh quango chief quits

THE chairman of the Welsh Development Agency yesterday resigned in the run-up to its reorganisation under the Government's devolution plans. Mr David Rowe-Beddoe said he would step down before his current contract expires next July.

But he also confirmed that he would apply to be chairman of the new expanded WDA when the post - the key public job in Wales - was advertised and determined by open competition under the new Welsh assembly.

## Sally Croft

AN ARTICLE in yesterday's *Independent*, stated that Sally Croft, one of the two former members of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh sect released from a prison sentence in the United States had been convicted of attempted murder. In fact the charge was conspiracy to murder. We apologise for the error.

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# Spring brings a lull before the ice-storm ahead

From the ridge sheltering the Sherpa village of Dingboche from the north, the first thing that struck us was the new green of barley shoots in the patchwork of stone-wall enclosed fields.

Spring is just taking hold in these most northerly fields of the Khumbu and after weeks of looking on nothing but ice and rock the effect is profound.

It is like a lure. Further down the colours will be warmer as the rhododendrons, primulas and brier roses start to bloom. But Dingboche, at 4,350m, is as far down the valley as our Himalayan Kingdoms Expeditions group will descend. In three days, we will be back at Base Camp waiting for the weather that will allow us to make a bid for the top.

The five-hour descent to Dingboche took us past the memorials to Sherpas who have died serving climbing expeditions in the Everest region. Decked with prayer flags, these sad memorials stand along a crest with the highest peaks of the Himalayas to the North and the lower valleys of the Khumbu, where the men would otherwise have tended their fields of potatoes and buckwheat.

Our retreat to one of the many trekker lodges at around the 4,000m level is standard procedure for Everest climbers shortly before their big push. I have certainly got thinner and my muscles have become wasted during our weeks of acclimatisation at high camps, including Camp 3 at some 7,200 metres on the Lhotse Face. Hopefully a few days of yak steaks, hash browns with cheese, bread and honey and the Nepali-brewed San Miguel beer in the Snow Lion Lodge will put a bit of fat back on.

Base Camp, when we left, was in a state of transition. Some climbers were still up high completing their acclimatisation and others had already left for a spot of R&R in the (comparatively) oxygen-rich air of places like our own Dingboche. Meanwhile, Sherpas from the various expeditions were completing the job of fixing lines to the South Col and stocking the high camps with oxygen.

Several of us have brought down coughs and various other ailments that we hope will clear in these more normal conditions. My own, fairly slight back, seems to have gone al-



STEPHEN GOODWIN

**Everest Diary**

**Dingboche**

most overnight. But there is a gamble to staying at a lodge. Trekkers are quite likely to have brought up new bugs and the Sherpa children are positive germ factories.

Getting back to full health should be helped by her not having a broken leg. Though she did not know it when she turned back at 8,500m in 1995, she had fractured the head of her femur in a fall while descending from Camp 3 on an acclimatisation trip. "If I could get that far with a busted wheel, even though I'm three years older, I think I'm in with a good chance," she says.

Lily is shaking off a bad cough but, and the exigencies of time, have probably put paid to a bold plan to climb not only Everest but its neighbours Lhotse (8,501m) and Nuptse (7,879m) in the same trip.

An administrator in a brokerage office in Hong Kong, Lily took to climbing when, as she says, she "became too old and too slow to chase a squash ball". For five years, she was member of the then colony's squash team. Gratifyingly, to me at least, she is not one of the "it has to be Everest" brigade. Lily's first intention was to climb Lhotse. "I wanted to climb an 8,000m peak. Lhotse is a more technically interesting peak than Everest and it's cheaper." And now she says if she could pick any peak to be successful on, it would be K2, the world's second highest mountain and a tick that would carry more "kudos" among mountaineers than the one which we currently are bound.

"The beauty of mountaineering is it is an excuse to go different parts of the world. I think I will get as much satisfaction if I am successful in this venture as I did in climbing Ama Dablam [6,856m, the chi-



**Standing stones:**  
Memorials to Sherpa guides who have died serving climbing expeditions in the Everest region – a stark reminder of the dangers ahead

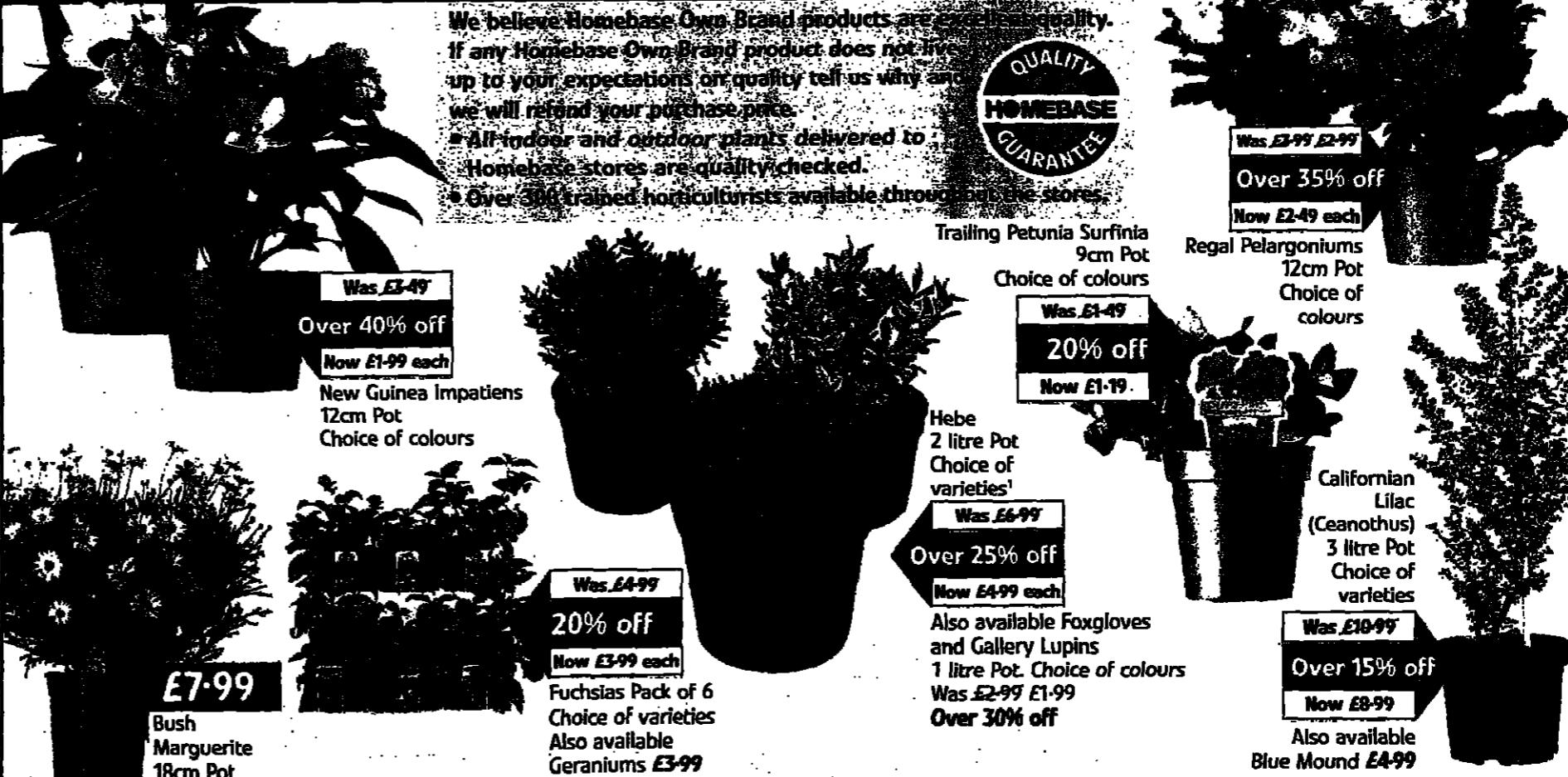
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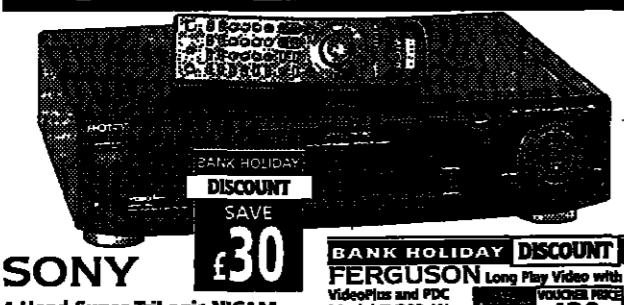
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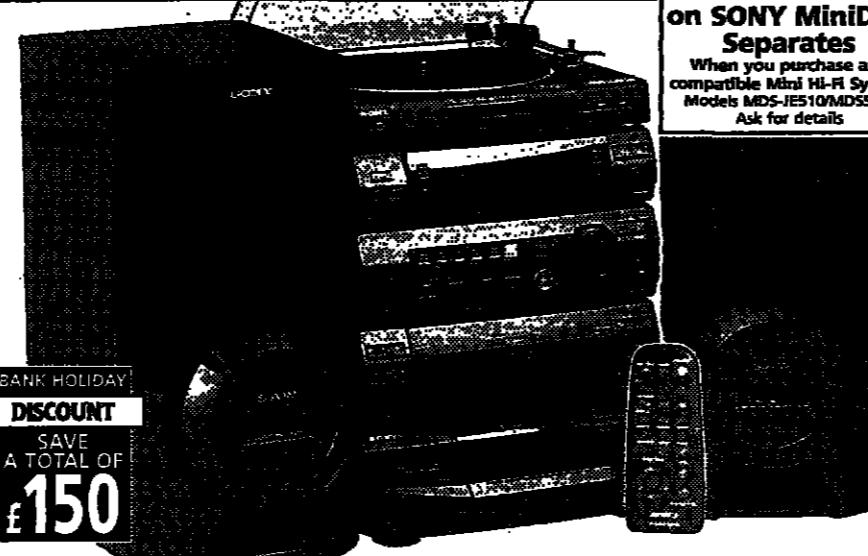
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# Tales of horror from Malaysia's camps

Government that once welcomed foreign workers is now using riot police against them

By Richard Lloyd Parry  
in Kuala Lumpur

IT IS more than a month since the young man named Nasir was admitted to the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital but it is obvious he is still in a very bad way. The gashes and holes in his chest and arms have healed to white scars, and the plaster on his leg has been replaced with a bandage. But there is dried blood on his sheets and pillow, and the surgical scar on his belly is livid and raw. Nasir is not going anywhere but, just in case he should decide to take a walk, his skinny left wrist is handcuffed to the bed.

Two policemen guard him and, although they have slipped away for lunch, the presence of visitors makes him nervous. "I'm afraid to talk to you because the police will beat me up," he says. Nasir understands very well what his captors are capable of. The gashes on his chest and the break in his leg were caused by blows from police batons so violent that they broke the skin. The smaller, round patches are scars from bullet entry wounds – the one in his belly has never healed properly. Nasir was not tried or convicted of any crime. He was shot and beaten up by Malaysian riot police for a simple reason – because he ran away from a detention camp for foreign workers.

His is just one of the most dramatic cases. Over the last few years, according to a growing body of evidence, thousands of foreigners have been beaten, bullied, or have suffered medical neglect and torture in immigrant detention camps throughout west Malaysia. The abuse has killed some and left many more sick, impoverished and desperate.

The Malaysian government denies the allegations, and Malaysian human rights activists who document the evidence risk prosecution and imprisonment. But despite repeated requests, the government refused to allow the media, non-governmental organisations and even the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to enter the camps.

The tragedy of people like Nasir has its roots, paradoxically, in a



Malaysian police check if Semenyih camp detainees are alive after the 26 March riot which broke out when officers tried to repatriate inmates

Photograph: EPA

success story. Until last year, under the vigorous leadership of its Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia was an Asian success story, with high growth and ambitions to rise from developing to industrialised status by 2020. But visionary determination was not enough to achieve Dr Mahathir's vision: the skyscrapers, roads and factories also required large amounts of cheap labour, much of it foreign, and much of it illegal.

For years police and immigration authorities turned a blind eye to waves of poor foreigners – many, like Nasir, from Indonesia – brought over for a fee by highly organised "agents". But last year, along with

most of its south-east Asian neighbours, Malaysia was struck by currency depreciation and economic crisis. The job of sending home illegal immigrants – Operation Go Away – suddenly became urgent.

But both the way in which they have been rounded up and the conditions in the camps have been severely criticised. In 1995, a Malaysian human rights organisation called Tenaganita published a report based on interviews with former detainees and detailing serious abuses. As a consequence, the head of Tenaganita, Iren Fernandez, is on trial for disseminating "false news". But interviews conducted this week indicate that little has changed.

Mr Hosseni has written to a friend complaining of illness, a lack of water for bathing and about guards who demand bribes even for a drink of water. "We have tickets to go to Australia next week," says his friend. "I

am afraid they will take him to the airport and put him on a plane to Iran. There he will be killed."

Local people whose homes overlook the Semenyih detention centre confirm many of the allegations in Tenaganita's report. "You could see through the fence when they first brought them in," said one woman. "They would make them stand in the sun and beat them with batons. Sometimes the sticks had barbed wire around them. Their relatives who were visiting would complain about having to pay bribes to the guards."

It was at Semenyih on 26 March that the abuse reached its climax. Early that morning, Malaysian riot police entered camps across the

country and began transporting their occupants to ports for repatriation. Semenyih contained several hundred detainees from Aceh, in Sumatra, where Islamic guerrillas have been fighting for independence from Indonesia since the 1950s. A riot broke out, and in the course of the fighting, hundreds of Acehnese break out through the fence. Nasir was among them, but was shot, captured and beaten up.

According to the official count, eight men from Aceh and one policeman were killed. Local people say the shooting began at 2am and went on for more than six hours. "I cannot believe such a small number were killed," said one local man.

Former PM admits part in Rwanda genocide

By Rupert Cornwell

IN A landmark development, a former prime minister of Rwanda has pleaded guilty before an international court to six charges of genocide, thus becoming the first official from the former Hutu regime to admit that the 1994 slaughter of more than 800,000 people amounted to genocide.

Addressing the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, Jean Kambanda declared that he fully understood he would be able to mount no defence to the charges, which carry a likely sentence of life in prison. "In deciding to plead guilty, I did so consciously," he told the court. "No one forced me to do it."

Thus far none of the other 24 persons accused of genocide has entered a similar plea, insisting that the number of victims had been exaggerated and that the killings were a normal part of war. Mr Kambanda's decision raises the prospect that he will testify against some of them.

Even by the ponderous standards of international courts, the ICTR has hitherto been a débâcle, unable to wrap up a single trial in three-and-a-half years of existence, and savagely criticised for incompetence and waste in a United Nations report in 1997. But with the guilty plea, "a certain psychological corner had been turned," according to a senior court official.

Mr Kambanda was prime minister over a three-month period in 1994 when at least 800,000 – some estimate 1 million – Tutsi and moderate Hutus were killed. Though order of a kind has returned to Rwanda, rebel Hutu militias are still active in the north-west, killing 10 people in an attack on a village only this week.

In contrast to the ICTR, the current Rwandan government is pressing harsh justice against those suspected of participating in the massacres. Last week, 22 convicted criminals were publicly executed, and 130,000 others are in jail awaiting trial.

The government in Kigali vows that it will execute all those found guilty of "Category One" war crimes. Mr Kambanda, on the other hand, lived quietly in Kenya before being extradited to Tanzania last year.

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# Blair launches campaign to buy off the French

By Katherine Butler  
in Brussels

FRANTIC efforts to buy off the French were under way last night to prevent the historic summit on European economic and monetary union from being overshadowed by a furious row over who will run the single currency.

Tony Blair as summit chairman will try to steer a compromise today which ensures that the job goes for eight years to the Dutch Central Banker Wim Duisenberg, but allows the French to walk away with some grace.

French President Jacques Chirac was officially clinging to his demand last night that a Frenchman – not the majority-backed Dutch candidate – should head the future European Central Bank.

The bank, to be established in July, will set interest rate policy for the euro zone and its president will

hold one of the most powerful positions in Europe. The French European Affairs Minister, Pierre Moscovici, said the eight-year term of office should be split *de facto* and that France should be in charge at the bank when euro notes and coins go into circulation in 2002.

Amid mounting concern, particularly in Germany, that splitting the term of office would rob the post of independence and undermine the credibility of the euro, a number of sweeteners for the French were being discussed.

The presidency of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development could now go to a Frenchman, while the European Commission signalled a major concession to the French in a long-running dispute over Credit Lyonnais, the troubled French bank. Jacques Santer, the European Commission president, indicated that the com-

mission may not block a French government move to channel millions of pounds in state aid to the bank.

The French were also handed another olive branch as Germany backed away from a bid to tighten budgetary discipline for the "in" countries. France, faced with a massive and growing unemployment problem, had objected to German demands that single currency countries freeze public spending and commit themselves to doing so in writing, for the rest of this year.

The text of a declaration which was set to be agreed by EU finance ministers last night omitted the key passages which the French had rejected.

Failure to settle the ECB row today would send a damaging signal to the financial markets. Central bankers are nervous at the prospect of the key job falling victim to political influence. An initial compromise was for the eight-year term of

office of the president to be halved, with the French candidate, Jean-Claude Trichet, taking over from the Dutchman midway through 2002.

But this would be in flagrant contravention of the Maastricht treaty and would invite claims that the custodian of the euro was not independent. The European Commission repeated its view yesterday that the term of office could not be split under the rules of the treaty.

Another option would be for a gentleman's agreement allowing Mr Duisenberg to retire although this would not be a formal agreement.

One of the main obstacles to a deal along these lines is that the Dutch government, facing elections next week, is reluctant to be seen to have caved in to French pressure.

Tony Blair was in the Netherlands last night attempting to agree a strategy with the Dutch Prime Minister, Wim Kok.

**It may be their money, but it's our custard**

THERE WILL be a strong British flavour to the launch of the euro in Brussels today after Britain insisted on the heads of state of the European Union sitting down to an all-British menu for lunch, writes Colin Brown.

Chancellor Kohl, President

Chirac and the other European heads will settle the final details for the euro over a lunch hosted by Tony Blair, as the leader of the European Presidency.

Beef will be off the menu but there were some European eyebrows raised at the solidly British menu of

Scottish salmon, Welsh lamb and an English cheese-board followed by chocolate parfait in a whisky-flavoured custard.

Britain had the choice of the menu even though the European Council is picking up the bill for the meal in Brussels. There had been

suggestions the historic lunch should have reflected the variety of the European nations and the French objected to the menu being printed in English, but that left British officials unimpressed. "The bloody French are always complaining," said one.



Standard bearer: A neo-Nazi sympathiser carries a flag during a rally of the far-right NPD. Photograph: AP

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## Germany's new Nazis clash with left

By Imre Karacs  
in Bonn

FRESH from their stunning election victory last weekend, neo-Nazis in east Germany took the campaign into the streets yesterday, only to see their thunder stolen by the extreme left.

Rallying at the Leipzig monument commemorating the defeat of Napoleon, thousands of blackshirted thugs of the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) covered behind police lines as masked combatants of the ultra-left pelted them with bottles, ball-bearings and paving stones. More than 6,000 police troops and border guards fought to maintain order; their water cannons directed mostly against the punks flying the red flag.

The NPD had hoped for a 15,000-strong crowd but could only muster 4,000. They and their red-and-black banners were bussed into the city after a court in Leipzig ruled overnight that the demonstration could not be banned.

In the morning, police cordoned off the centre of Leipzig, keeping both sides away from the shopping district, and erected roadblocks on all main thoroughfares into the city. They let

the buses pass, after confiscating weapons from passengers.

The left, however, had already arrived for an anti-Nazi concert on Thursday night, and laid on a welcome for their adversaries by covering the 300ft tall monument with a banner declaring "Fascism – never again". It was the ultra-left who opened yesterday's proceedings by charging police lines and hurling stones and petrol bombs. Four people, including two police officers, were injured in the ensuing battle, and dozens arrested.

The neo-Nazis maintained discipline, however, and patiently listened to their speakers. Holger Apfel, head of the NPD's youth wing, was cheered when he called for deporting foreigners who were supposed to steal jobs from Germans and sponge off the country's welfare system.

It was these kind of slogans that netted another right-wing party, the German People's Union (DVU), nearly 200,000 votes in last Sunday's Saxony-Anhalt elections. The NPD's spokesmen yesterday again rejected an alliance with the DVU "phantom party", even though the latter has just scored the biggest triumph for the German extreme right since the war.

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## National Front set to capture Toulon seat

THE FAR-RIGHT National Front is likely to win back its only French parliamentary seat in a by-election in Toulon this weekend, further damaging the credibility of the "traditional" French right, writes John Lichfield in Toulon.

In the first round of the election last Sunday, the far-right candidate, Cendrine Le Chevallier, wife of the National Front mayor of the town, topped the poll with 39.5 per cent of the vote. The candidate of the centre-right UDF alliance was eliminated with only 22 per cent of the vote.

Ms Le Chevallier, seeking to replace her husband, who was disqualified for infringing campaign finance rules, needs to attract less than half of the centre-right vote to beat her Socialist opponent and take the seat in the run-off tomorrow.

This is not guaranteed: there was a very low turn-out in the first round last Sunday (only 45 per cent) and a somewhat different cast of electors may take part this weekend. Some local and national leaders of the traditional right have been urging their voters to block the Front at all costs; oth-

ers have been silent or neutral, or have, implicitly, favoured a far-right victory.

The by-election has, therefore, confirmed the utter disarray of the French centre-right parties, split raggedly down the middle after the regional elections in March in a dispute over unauthorised local alliances with the Front.

Even though Toulon is well-established as a National Front town – the most racist town in France, it is sometimes said – a victory for Ms Le Chevallier would be a substantial coup for the extreme right in France. It would be only the second time in normal conditions that the National Front had won victory by a full majority of voters: it is with more than 50 per cent of the vote.

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# US Senate backs plan to expand Nato

By Mary Dejevsky  
in Washington

THE Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland all expressed their pleasure yesterday after the United States Senate voted by a large majority to approve their inclusion in Nato. The vote, on Thursday evening, represented a rare foreign policy victory for President Bill Clinton who had carefully steered the policy of Nato expansion through an initially sceptical congressional establishment.

The vote was 80 to 19, 12 more votes than the two-thirds majority required. A succession of amendments that would have set conditions for future Nato expansion and US financial obligations were all rejected. When the final vote was taken it was decided that senators would call out their votes from their assigned seats, rather than from anywhere in the chamber, a ceremonial doting for votes regarded as of historical significance.

Mr Clinton described the bill's passage as "miles on the road to an undivided, democratic and peaceful Europe", and he reaffirmed US commitment both to Nato and to continued US involvement in Europe.

"The message this vote sends is clear," he said. "American support for Nato is firm; our leadership for security on both sides of the Atlantic is strong and there is a solid bipartisan foundation for an active US role in the world."

Mr Clinton had earlier described Nato expansion as progress in "realising the dream of a generation - a Europe that is united, democratic and secure for the first time since the rise of the nation states on the European continent".

The US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who is the daughter of Czech immigrants to the US, welcomed the Senate vote as "a moment of injustice undone, of promises kept, and of a unified Europe begun".

The White House had watched the debate with concern since it opened more than a month ago, worried not that the inclusion of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland would be rejected, but that the Senate might impose a three-year moratorium on further expansion, or restrict US subsidies on weapons sales to the new members.

At the outset there were also complaints from opponents of Nato expansion that the debate was being nudged into odd corners of the Senate timetable to keep it out of the limelight. In the past week, however, the debate was scheduled in continuous sessions, and produced one of the liveliest and spirited Senate debates in years.

Proponents of Nato expansion had argued from the perspective of US obligations to the victims of the Cold War, the vision of a united Europe, and the benefits to US defence companies.

Opponents spanned a broad spectrum of opinion, from prominent Russian specialists and left-wing idealists such as Ben Cohen, of Ben & Jerry's ice-cream, who feared Russian pique and the rise of Russian nationalism, to right-wing American isolationists who saw no reason for American engagement in Europe now that the Cold war was over.

The vote, however, which makes the US the fifth country to ratify Nato expansion, suggested that the extent of opposition, at least in Congress, had been exaggerated.

Sacred site: Tipper Gore (right), wife of US Vice President Al Gore, listens to Sarah Netanyahu, wife of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem yesterday. The Gores are in Israel to mark the country's 50th anniversary

Photograph: Jacqueline Larma/AP

## VW strikes gold as Beetlemania grips America

David Usborne in New York sees an old favourite roar back with a vengeance

IN A COUNTRY in love all over again with big cars - not long, low cruisers but those towering sports utilities with room for half a soccer team - there would seem little hope for a nipper from Volkswagen.

But with its new Beetle, VW is striking gold. For reasons that can only be guessed at - nostalgia for the old Beetle of the Seventies, its look that is still bulbous but also sleek, or VW's inspired advertising campaign - the new Beetle is as sought-after here as the Viagra potency pill. It is so hot there is already a black market for them.

"It's been overwhelming to say the least," says Demetrio Merlino of Prey Auto of Greenwich, Connecticut. Since the

first cars were shipped from the VW Puebla factory in Mexico last month, Prey has received three that were sold instantly. It has a waiting list of 75 customers, most of whom will have to wait until October for delivery. Other dealers tell similar tales. While the official price for a basic model starts at \$15,200 (£9,500), Prey has been overrun with customers offering to pay thousands more to jump the queue. Mr Merlino refuses such offers, but numerous dealerships around the US are gladly taking the additional mark-up.

There is also evidence of

dealers not officially affiliated with VW buying as many Beetles as they can lay their hands on and selling them on at grossly inflated prices. And people are biting, even though buying from non-authorised dealers nullifies the manufacturer's warranty on the car.

And those lucky few who are driving their own Beetles around already are finding that they have an unexpected opportunity to turn them around immediately by selling them second-hand, if only barely, at a handsome profit.

It was a temptation that presented itself to Wally Leach

of Tennessee, for instance, who paid \$18,000 for his model. Within a few days, he was stopped in a supermarket car park by a man who offered him \$27,000 for it. And that after someone else had tried to pay him \$23,000. "When I told him 'No', he said, 'Can I give you more?'" Mr Leach recalled.

The original "people's car", the Beetle was first made in Germany in 1939. It arrived in the United States in the 1950s and was a hit largely because it was affordable and easy to run. By the Seventies it had also become an icon of the flower-power revolution.

Although it retains the contours of its forebear, the new Beetle is altogether more modern: it has air conditioning, a real heater (rather than just air circulated over the motor) as well as an engine in the front rather than the rear. It will not be on sale in Europe until autumn.

It is being promoted here with an advertising campaign whose main slogan is "Less Flower, More Power". As well as employing the usual television and billboard strategies, VW has been identifying the hippest parties and events at clubs in New York and Los Angeles and parking Beetles by the kerb outside.

The Beetle offers a tremendous boost to VW, which has clung on in the North American market during a thin decade when most of its European competitors gave up entirely.

It is pushing out as many of the cars from Puebla as it possibly can.

Mr Merlino has no simple explanation for the phenomenon. It may be, however, that the new Beetle is becoming America's must-have-one fashion accessory of the moment; a toy with the chic appeal of a Swatch, but a tad more expensive. "People kind of like it just to have one in their driveway", Mr Merlino offers.

## Cuba's American refugees

By Phil Davison  
Latin America Correspondent

TWENTY-FIVE years ago today, Black Panther activist Jeanne Chesimard was involved in a New Jersey motorway shootout which left one policeman dead and another wounded. Now, she lives freely in Cuba, writes books and receives living expenses from Fidel Castro's government.

Ms Chesimard, now 50 and calling herself Assata Shakur, is one of nearly 100 serious criminals who fled the United States and were granted political asylum by Mr Castro's communist regime. The Clinton administration has asked Cuba

to hand them over but Mr Castro refuses.

New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman on Thursday offered a \$100,000 (£60,000) reward to anyone who brings Ms Chesimard back to complete a life sentence handed down in 1977. She broke out of jail in a daring escape in 1979 when her visitors, former comrades in a militant black group, took a guard hostage.

She is believed to have fled to Cuba in 1984, where she has since become a grandmother and taken a master's degree. She says she did not shoot New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster on 2 May 1973.

Joining in the campaign to return her and the other American criminals harboured by the Cuban government, New Jersey Republican Congressman Bob Franks described Ms Chesimard as "a cold-blooded cop killer" and said Washington should not consider improving relations with Havana until all the American convicts are returned.

"This is normal behaviour for Fidel Castro, to give safe haven to terrorists, to drug dealers, to cop killers," said Republican Florida Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Cuban-American. In its annual report on international terrorism, published yesterday, the US State Department listed Cuba among countries harbouring terrorists.

Responding to the calls to return Ms Chesimard, a Cuban government spokesman noted that Havana has no extradition treaty with Washington and did not necessarily believe Ms Chesimard was guilty.

Among the other American convicts in Cuba is former Black Panther William Lee Brent, now 68, who hijacked an American domestic airliner to Cuba in 1969. Cuba first jailed Mr Brent for almost two years, suspecting he may be a CIA agent, but then freed him. He works as a disc jockey and announcer on Cuban state radio.

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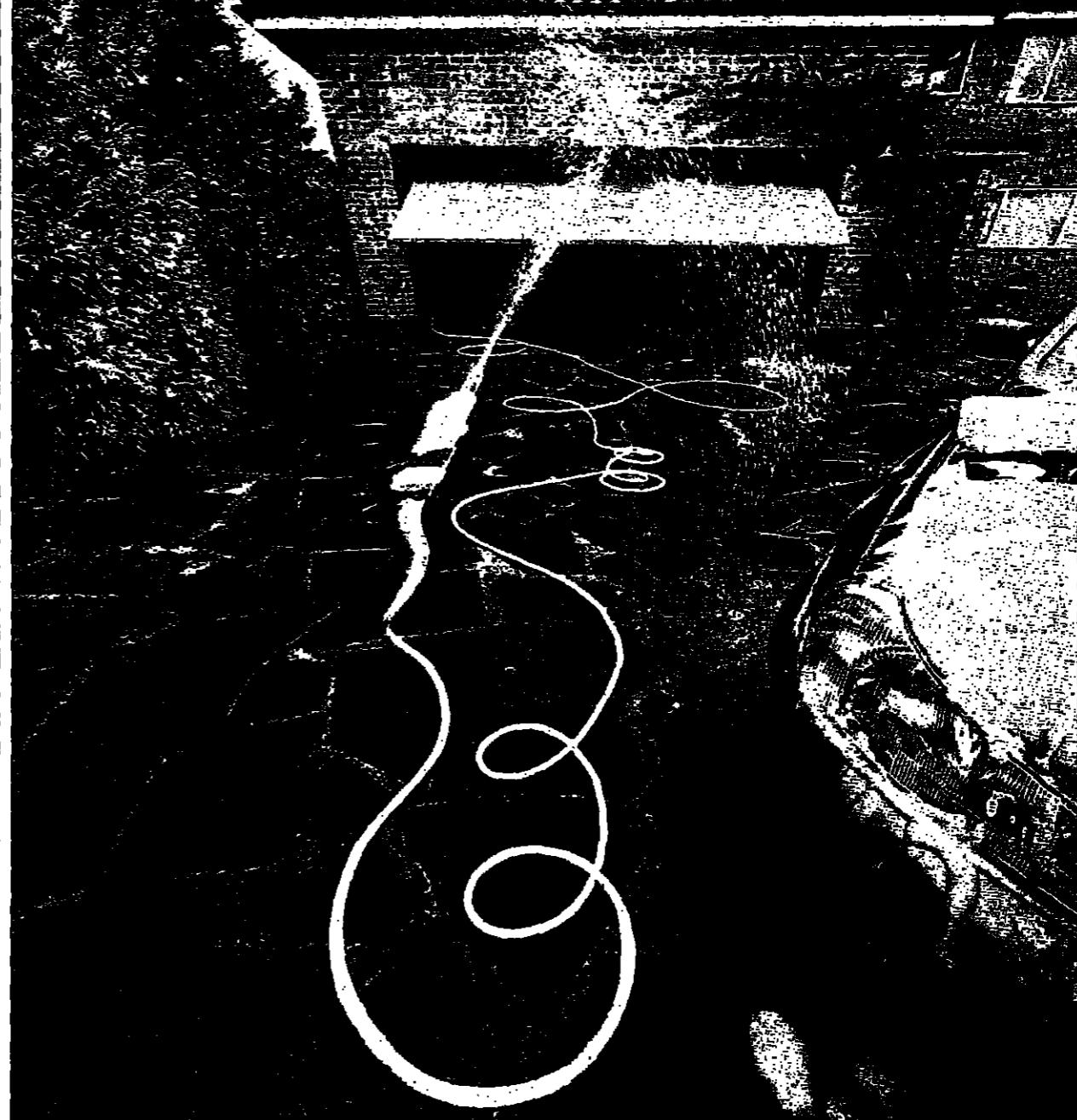
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# State handouts for Mafia men of honour

By Anne Hanley  
in Rome

IN 1991, an agricultural labourer, Vito Vitale, met with an accident on a Sicilian farm and was awarded a disability allowance by the state pension fund. On 14 April, seven years and many monthly payments later, the reclusive "invalid" was arrested.

For when Vitale was not arranging for relations to limp down to the post office to pick up his \$200 (£120) cheque for him, he was, so investigators believe, busy being deputy chairman of a multi-national company with an estimated annual turnover of 250 trillion lire: the Mafia (Sicily) Inc.

Needless to say, he was not hampered by an obvious physical handicap. Vitale, reputed to have been the deadliest of Cosa Nostra hitmen, is not the only Italian mobster who has supplemented his income with a little something from the state, according to an unpublished report by the parliamentary Anti-Mafia committee which was leaked in the weekly *Il Mondo*.  
Dozens of recipients of state money are named in the report, which suggests that being amongst Italy's 3.5 million invalids on allowances, or the 700,000 people on minimum pensions or income support, is a point of honour for the Mafia's *uomini d'onore* (men of honour). Mafiosi are by tradition from

country stock. The organisation is still strongly rooted in Sicily's impoverished agricultural hinterland. And like their law-abiding fellow citizens, even the highest-earning hitmen, explosives experts, drug refiners and arms traffickers have an innate conviction that the state is there to be fleeced. In the case of boss of bosses, Salvatore Riina, being seen to be fiddling the state like any local bumpkin was a vital part of his defiance: his fury when he was refused an agricultural labourer's pension to see him through his 12 life sentences after his arrest in 1993 knew no bounds.

Others have been more skillful than their one-time chief, managing to juggle prison and

hand-outs. Three of the mafiosi charged with planting a bomb which killed five people and destroyed a wing of Florence's Uffizi Gallery in 1993 are on the pension fund payroll, and two of them are classed as serious invalids.

Still others – like Vitale until two weeks ago – find being on the run from the law no barrier to picking up their cheques.

Conspicuous by his absence from the Anti-Mafia committee report is Bernardo Provenzano, the legendary Mafia chief who dropped out of sight over 30 years ago and is now Italy's most-wanted pensioner. Further investigation may reveal which queue in which Sicilian post office he can be picked up in.



Iranians yesterday mourn the remains of 35 comrades newly repatriated from Iraq where they died in the 1980-88 war. Photograph: AP

## Bidding in Baghdad for a mirror of silver with pockets full of paper

### BAGHDAD DIARY



Patrick Cockburn

I spent a frustrating evening trying to buy a silver mirror and a carpet at the al-Baghdadi auction house on the east bank of the Tigris. The prices in both cases were cheap but I found it impossible to go on bidding because they were in Iraqi dinars, now valued at 1,480 to the US dollar. I was confident enough when the auctioneer started the bidding for the mirror at 50,000 dinars. This was cheap. The mirror was pretty and made 50 years

ago in the holy city of Kerbala. Others, mostly Iraqi antique dealers, liked the mirror too. The bidding was hot. When the auctioneer called out 182,000 dinars I dropped out – 182,000 of anything seemed like too much money. The price was still only 120, far less than the mirror was worth anywhere outside Baghdad, but I found it impossible to keep putting my hand up because the nominal figure was so high. In private dealings, Iraqis avoid this prob-

lem by using American hundred dollar bills. Coins are no longer minted because hyper-inflation has made them virtually worthless. When I first went to Iraq in 1977, a dinar was worth around three US dollars

For most purposes Iraqi dinars are necessary. They usually come in bundles of 250 dinar notes and the currency weighs a lot when when you change a

hundred dollar bill. Coins are no longer minted because hyper-inflation has made them virtually worthless. When I first went to Iraq in 1977, a dinar was worth around three US dollars

I stayed at the al-Rashid hotel, the usual haunt of journalists in Baghdad. It still has its mosaic of George Bush with jagged teeth on the floor which you have to step on to get into the lobby. Underneath is the logo: "Bush is Criminal."

The ground-floor bar of the

hotel was, in fact, accidentally hit by part of a Tomahawk missile brought down by Iraqi anti-aircraft fire. The bar was wrecked. Nobody was injured because Saddam Hussein had summoned an Islamic meeting in solidarity with Iraq in a nearby conference hall. Many of the delegates were staying in the al-Rashid. In deference to their Islamic susceptibilities, the bar had suddenly taken alcoholic drinks off its shelves. Seldom can temperance have saved lives so quickly. When the Tomahawk hit, the bar was completely deserted.

Alcohol has since been banned in hotels and restaurants. But it is available in specially licensed shops. I bought some Bavarian beer and a bottle of Chianti. Something nasty had clearly happened to the latter between Tuscany and Baghdad and it tasted like neat vinegar.

Then he produced x-ray plates. They were of the chest of his 24-year-old cousin Ahmed, who has a weak heart, taken in London 13 years ago. He had not been able to go back for a second operation because of the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war and then sanctions. We went to another, poorer farm and the same thing happened. The farmer produced an elderly x-ray of the skull of his five-year-old daughter Fatima. She could not stand upright.

There was something infinitely touching about these old x-rays. They seemed to symbolise the desperation of ordinary Iraqis over sanctions. The farmers should be better off than the townspeople, but almost of them have at least one relative ill or dying because he or she cannot get proper medical help.

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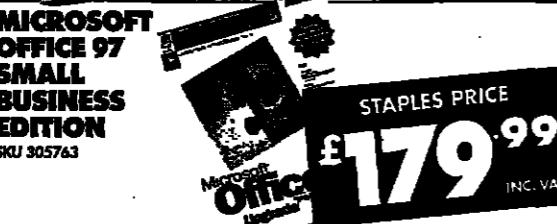
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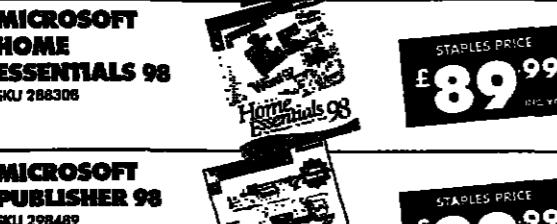
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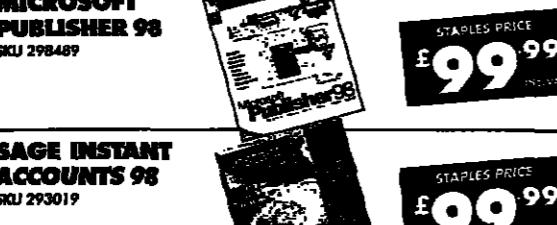
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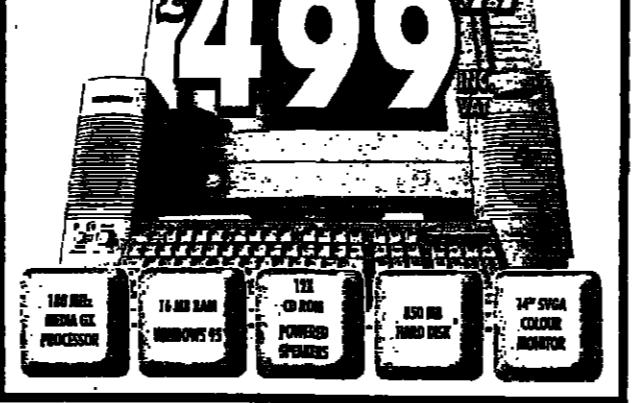
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Ready for revival:  
Rex Lawson with one of his 10,000 perforated pianola scores at his home in London

Photograph:  
Nicola Kurz



## The maestro of the rolls

"LITTLE perforations" says Rex Lawson, holding the paper lace of a piano roll up to the light. "I tried to get Tetley's to sponsor me once but they wouldn't". Which was silly of them. They'd have been in very good company. Arnold Bennett had a pianola. H G Wells had one. George Bernard Shaw had one. Queen Victoria kept one at Balmoral.

Now wrongly seen as a musical dinosaur, the pianola was once a firm fixture in every parlour. It remains a firm fixture in Rex Lawson's parlour along with his four cats, his three-foot beard and his 10,000 piano rolls who all live together in south-east London. The cellar where he keeps all the fox-trots is cold and rather damp. By a happy coincidence, this is exactly what the fragile paper piano rolls like best: an air-conditioned, centrally-heated cellar would have turned them to dust by now.

Invented at the end of the last century, the pianola allowed great music to be reproduced in the home by anyone with a good set of calf muscles. In some ways the invention was a destructive force in domestic music-making: suddenly you didn't have to spend your time fingering with the piano teacher to play all the right notes. But the pianola was also a force for good in musical education which made it possible to play the finest music in places no concert pianist would ever tread.

A piece of music too complex for the human performer is being revived with the help of that musical dinosaur, the pianola. Louise Levene gets in tune

maninov and Gershwin, among others, saw the force of this and made recordings direct to pianola. Stravinsky, even a fan of polyrhythms, was a big enthusiast, but the biggest idea belonged to George Antheil, the Polish-American composer and self-styled "Bad Boy of Music", who rather fancied a massed chorus of pianolas and wrote his 1927 Ballet Mécanique for 17 of them. It has yet to be played at Nancarrow.

The pianola is automatic only in the sense that, say, a lawn mower is automatic because the results vary enormously depending on the skill of the operator. In the end, Antheil's ambitious project was performed on a mere handful of pianos plus the various bits of percussion and the street demanded by the score. It is Rex Lawson's earnest wish to stage the piece as Antheil intended but player-piano virtuosos are thin on the ground and without that level of expertise the synchronisation of 17 instruments is a bit of a non-starter.

The most famous exponent of the player-piano was Coulon Nancarrow. Born in Texarkana, Arkansas in 1912 he studied music in Cincinnati and Boston under Roger Sessions and Walter Piston. After fighting the fascists in Spain, Nancarrow was regarded with increasing sus-

picion by the US authorities who suspended his passport, finally causing him to retreat to Mexico in disgust in 1940. He wasn't given a visa to return until 1981. He remained in almost total seclusion, creating music of increasing complexity. Discontent with an early human performance of one of his compositions led Nancarrow to experiment instead with the tireless precision of the pianola. Over the last decade his

rich blend of perfections. David Buckland's set of steel tubes and pillows was lit by Peter Mumford's remarkable arrangement of sidelights and baby spots which played about the stage like searchlights, colouring the mood and manner of the dance with a succession of green, violet and crimson filters.

For Lawson, the dynamic of the dance mimics the action of the pianola itself. "The ones rushing around were like the notes on the roll and the ones walking round the stage were like the roll itself". Davies's company have been rehearsing to recordings and before Thursday's premiere Lawson was slightly anxious that the switch from taped music to live pianola would prove difficult. "You can never guarantee a pianola's going to sound the same twice. You have to have your eye on the roll."

Lawson's player-piano is equipped with various levers to enable him to humanise the sound. While his legs and feet pump away his fingers and thumbs tweak artistically at the levers like a pinball wizard, regulating the soft and sustaining pedals, varying the speed and adjusting the balance between left and right hand to approximate the pulse that sets apart man from machine.

It was the first time Lawson had worked with dancers and contemporary choreographers' relaxed relationship with their chosen music came as something of a surprise to him. "I thought they danced to phrases, but they don't. She got the dancers to dance within the mu-

Studies have become hugely fashionable. They were released on CD, some were reorchestrated for live performance by fit young pianists with a streak of musical machismo resolved that they could play the unplayable.

The inevitable emphasis on the complex timing and super-human speed of Nancarrow's music means that people often lose sight of the sometimes quite everyday influences that underpin it. Just as Stravinsky deconstructed popular mu-

sic – she certainly can't get them to dance to the speed of the music, they'd be running around like jellybeans".

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## Measures that don't add up

THERE'S a character in *Measure For Measure* lewdly dubbed Mistress Overdone. For rather different reasons, Michael Boyd – director of the RSC's new staging of the play – could be nicknamed Mister Overdone. On the evidence of this and his recent *Much Ado*, which swamped that comedy which picture frames and mirrors and other appearance-and-reality symbols, he's a man much given to going too far.

The opening of this *Measure For Measure* is a classic instance of the kind of straining for innovation that's all too common now at the RSC. Other productions have communicated the du-

Striking, yes,  
but also forced  
and gimmicky,  
tritely rejuggling  
the text

bious haste with which the Duke dumps the responsibility for tightening the laws in licentious Vienna on to another man and the self-defeating contradiction of choosing a deputy he is out to expose as a hypocrite.

Other productions have suggested, too, that the Duke is in the middle of a profound nervous crisis.

They have always let him hang around long enough to hand over power in person before slipping away and returning in his friar disguise.

Here, though, the idea of a ruler *en extremis* is itself carried to lurid extremes. To the accompaniment of blaring nervous-breakdown music and with flashed-up doomy text predicting the violent fall of Babylon, there's an introductory dumbshow where we see Robert Glenister's haunted Duke tormentedly babbling his instructions in private onto a phonographic cylinder. It's through this crackly recording that his wishes become known.

Paul Taylor



Show: Robert Glenister and Clare Holman in 'Measure for Measure'  
Photograph: Bob Collier

### DAVID LISTER'S ARTS DIARY

THIS column wins no prize for politie correctness. OK, this column wins no prizes, period. But it is becoming increasingly hard to see any reason other than political and literary correctness for the £30,000 Orange Prize for Fiction. The women-only award was established three years ago to bring attention to female authors. With the pages of Company magazine featuring a group of twenty-something women novelists commanding six-figure book deals, Helen Fielding's benign gaze continuing to look down from the upper reaches of the bestsellers lists where Bridget Jones has taken up residence and the reigning Booker winner of the female gender, it's unclear how much of a battle really needs to be fought here.

But the shortlist itself does not suggest a crisis of unappreciated women striving to make their mark in a male-dominated literary world. Pauline Melville is on the list for a book that has already won the Whitbread first novel award; Carol Shields is a hugely successful Pulitzer Prize winner. This suggests a confusion of purpose among the prize's organisers. The broadcaster Sheena McDonald, who is chairing the judges this year, said: "It's a very rich

shortlist..." I guess she may have been referring to the wealth of talent, but on the other hand...

MEETING the balleromane, Lord Eatwell on Tuesday as he was appointed chairman of the Royal Ballet, I was reminded of his deliberations last year on "real" and "disguised" unemployment. The former Labour economics spokesman in the Lords had claimed the true level of unemployment was 12, not six per cent, as people doing jobs below their potential – such as an accountants selling hamburgers – were not in "real" employment.

He has plenty of scope for further research at Covent Garden. There is the sacked director of sales Keith Cooper earning a crust as a waiter; the former chief executive Mary Allen tending her garden; a deposed box office manager running a record shop.

Even Lord Eatwell, it seems, as Royal Ballet chairman and president of Queens College, Cambridge, is not in what he sees as the most "real" employment. "When I see old pals carrying their red ministerial boxes, I do feel a bit envious," he told me a little fondly.

WHEN *Sliding Doors* had its premiere on Monday it was noted that the Arts Council had refused to give the movie any lottery money. It's far from being the Arts Council's only failure to pick a winner. In his new history of the council, Richard Wits reveals that it turned up its collective nose some years back when urged it to invest in Cameron Mackintosh's new venture.

The worthies on the council laughed heartily at the preposterous idea. Whoever heard of making a musical out of TS Eliot's cat poems?

### ROBERT HANKS' WEEK IN RADIO

"THINGS fall apart, the centre cannot hold," wrote Yeats; and how very wrong he was. At present, the centre is holding so bloody well that it looks as if there won't be anything else left within a few years, not only in politics but in radio.

Talk radio is converging with music radio, radio is converging with television, and the stations are all converging with each other.

At any rate, new "bi-media" departments now reign at the BBC (so the people who make *Watchdog* and *Esther* will now also be in charge of all the features at Radio 4 – inspires you with confidence, no?), and TV personalities (Martin Bashir, Peter Snow) abound in the new schedules. Meanwhile Radio 3 seems to be trying to disguise itself as Radio 2 to escape its creditors, and Radio 4's new party-piece is its spot-on imitation of Radio 5. You notice this most with Broadcasting House, Four's new Sunday morning current affairs chat-show – not simply because of the presence of Eddie Mair, a Five Live alumna, but because it has the free-form, time-filling feel of much of Radio 5.

The show's most notable innovation has been its glance at the front pages: where other current affairs programme

will give you the headlines, Broadcasting House will also give you the plugs for inside features. Since Mair doesn't seem to open the paper to actually read these features, this must be one of the least labour-intensive services offered by any radio programme, as well as one that does no harm to anybody.

More interestingly, on Monday, fiction seemed to converge on reality: in On The Whole It's Been Jolly Good, a monologue written by Peter Timwood to mark Maurice Denham's 60th year in broadcasting, the actor played Sir Plympton Makepeace, a Tory buffer from the Shires who after 60 years marking time as a backbencher has just lost his seat to one of Blair's babes. Makepeace is a self-indulgent, lazy and not especially intelligent man with few, if any, friends.

His one contribution to political life was a bill to outlaw traffic on roads frequented by badgers; and he managed to go through the 1980s without registering Margaret Thatcher as anything but "That woman with the loud voice – I think she was the Prime Minister, but to me she looked more like a power-mad swimming baths attendant".

On the other hand, he is kind enough, as long as it doesn't interfere with his pleasures (he is a connoisseur of what he calls "dalliance", and an enthusiastic train-spotter); it is his proud boast that in all his time in Parliament he has done no harm to anybody.

Perhaps it was just Denham's shrewd, energetic performance, but this seemed more concentrated and thoughtful than most of Timwood's work – allowing the listener to see the damaging apathy of this sort of genteel reaction, but also to see that there are worse sorts of damage.

It made an intriguing pairing with *Collapse of Stout Party*. Sir Julian Critchley's daily readings from his autobiography. Not that Sir Julian is as idle and feeble as Sir Plympton; but in Friday's fantasy of how he would have played the last Tory leadership election had he still been in Parliament (himself supporting every candidate, and in return being dined and flattered to the limit of his capacity), there was something of the same modest sensuality, the same humorous scepticism about himself and the business of politics, and the same very reprehensible, but likeable frivolity.

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# Why's he a dirty Harry?

Woody Allen's latest film explores the world of the serial adulterer.

Annabel Ferriman reports on illicit sex

**PRESIDENT CARTER** did it in his heart, **President Mitterrand** did it in secret, **President Clinton** did it in the Oval Office and **Alan Clark** did it everywhere – adultery seems as popular today as a meal out at a restaurant or a night out at the movies. Why can't some men confine their sexual activities to the marital bed?

In this weekend's top grossing film, *Deconstructing Harry*, Woody Allen plays the part of a serial adulterer, who gets through three wives and a 25-year-old mistress, and isn't faithful to any of them. Indeed, Harry Block, the eponymous hero, not only sleeps around but specialises in taboo relationships: he sleeps with a patient of his second wife (she is an analyst), the sister of his third wife and, finally, an acolyte more than 30 years his junior.

It is a portrait of a sexual compulsive, of someone constantly seeking out new relationships who knows it will end in tears, but cannot stop himself. The unsatisfactory nature of his life is forcibly brought home to him when he finds that he has nobody to accompany him to a ceremony in his honour at his old university. He ends up taking a prostitute.

If adultery is so complicated, unsatisfactory and dangerous, why do men do it? Evidence suggests that plenty of them do. Figures vary from 10 to 75 per cent of men with live-in partners, depending on the type of questionnaire used. Telephone surveys apparently produce low numbers (possibly because the partner is in the room during the phone call) while magazine quizzes produce high numbers (men boasting?).

The *National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles*, financed by the Wellcome Trust, covering 20,000 adults and using validated sociological methods, showed that 4.5 per cent of married men had been unfaithful in the preceding year, while 15 per cent of co-habiting men had been unfaithful (the figures for women were 1.9 and 8.2 per cent respectively).

Dr Susan Marchant-Haycox, a London psychologist, puts forward four main reasons for adultery: fear of commitment; most men and women seek commitment in a relationship, but they also fear it; poor sex in marriage, which may affect about one third of couples; competition (men resenting partners being more successful on the work front and



Harry's game: Woody Allen plays a man who can't remain faithful to anyone, in *Deconstructing Harry*

turning to adultery to boost their egos) and curiosity.

Paul, a 48-year-old divorcee who works in television, admits to having been a serial adulterer over the 23 years that he was married. He started sleeping with other women because he and his wife were sexually incompatible. "There was something fundamentally wrong in my marriage. Passion was missing. I did not get to a level of fulfilment with my wife that I realised that I could achieve with other women. I had already started an affair with someone else before I even got married, and when my future wife found out about it, she

gave me an ultimatum – either we got married or we split up. I decided to get married.

"Then we just let things drag on. In an ideal world, one recognises that there is a problem and finds a way of dealing with it. But we neither sought help nor separated. "We both wanted children and I made a big effort after our daughter was born to make a go of things – not to be unfaithful and to develop other interests. I was faithful for several years but I was unhappy."

Paul says that he married too young – he was 22 – and Dr Marchant-Haycox says that adultery is particularly common among men who become hus-

bands at an early age. "They want to relive their youth, trying to have a young man's life they never had. They seek sexual adventure."

Dr Janet Reibstein, a psychologist practising in Cambridge and London and author of several books on sex and relationships, feels that men like the Harry Block character in *Deconstructing Harry* are suffering from a narcissistic disorder, which often turns into a sexual disorder.

"They want gratification for themselves, instead of entering into a reciprocal relationship. They cannot achieve intimacy. They are after personal grati-

fication above all. They feel depleted and unstimulated when their relationship is going through a lull or a low spot. They will say 'this relationship is not working' and seek erotic stimulation to make themselves feel better."

Dr Reibstein, who presented the Channel 4 series *Love Life*, was pessimistic about Harry Block's prognosis, however. "There are an awful lot of analysts who would say that extreme narcissistic disorders cannot be treated," she adds.

Are Harry Block and other adulterers just doing what a lot of men would like to do, but are prevented from doing by their consciences and beliefs? Apparently not, according to Dr Reibstein. When researching her book, *Sexual Arrangements*, she discovered that a man or woman's religious and ethical beliefs had little to do with their behaviour. "Whether or not someone disapproved of adultery did not seem to influence whether or not they committed it," she adds.

Paul's own belief did not stop him from adultery. "I felt terrible guilt because I had been brought up as a strict Christian. More than once I made an effort to get to grips with the situation and give up my dalliances, but it never lasted," he says.

"People either consciously or subconsciously shut their eyes to things they do not want to see. My wife chose not to recognise what was happening, except when it was put directly in her path. I am in a faithful relationship now, but I still find women desperately interesting – their looks, their minds, their bodies. Maybe I am a sex addict or maybe it is just that I find women fascinating. But if you are sexually satisfied and fulfilled, it is like an aesthetic pleasure. You can enjoy looking at women, but you don't have to do anything about it."

## The Briton bringing hope to Death Row

DOWN in Texas they tell you straight. "You ain't seen nothing like Death Row. That's where they keep the evil."

It is the ante-room to Hell, the dead zone where convicted murderers sit out their final years with only the prospect of freedom from their earthly guilt to look forward to. And it is not just in Texas but also in 12 other US states where the death penalty is used with gusto. It is law in a further 25 states, although they do not exercise it.

Those on the outside, mainly relatives of crime victims, but also a large swathe of the public, say that being sentenced to death by gas chamber, electric chair or lethal injection is too good for the inmates. America is a country fuelled by retribution. Next week, one young English lawyer will embark on

a three-month stint to try to help stem this tide of revenge.

Owen Williams, a 25-year-old trainee solicitor from Purley in Surrey, is flying to New York to work alongside George Kendall, one of the biggest guns in the Death Row defence arsenal, who works for the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the longest established civil rights organisation in America.

He has won his placement like America slaying its citizens is abhorrent to me. I cannot imagine anything worse and I can't sit around and let this happen to people."

Worthy and committed as all this sounds, he is about to touch down for the first time in an unforgiving land where 70

suicide when he was 17, an event which brought home to him the sanctity of human life.

"Before then I was far more blasé about things, but that kind of experience is not a great thing for a kid four months before his A-levels," Mr Williams says. "My fervent belief that human life is sacred flowed directly from the death of my father. I didn't wake up the day after we put him in the ground and say 'this is what I want to do with my life', but it was a turning point.

"To see a civilised society

for justice through the Lord (via the electric chair).

Since 1976 6,180 people have been sentenced under the



Owen Williams: deep personal conviction Jay Williams

per cent of the population favour the death penalty, where no politicians running for office dare to publicly oppose it and where TV evangelists scream

death penalty. Of those, about 450 have been executed, all men save two women, one of whom, Karla Faye Tucker, was given a lethal injection in February amid the glare of the world's media.

Discounting those who have died natural deaths in

prison and those whose sentences have been commuted to life or overturned, there are 3,600 people waiting on Death Row today who will spend an average of 11 years behind bars before their execution. Texas and Louisiana are way out in front. Together they put to death up to 10 people a month. Texas alone executed 37 male prisoners last year, the same number as in the rest of the US combined.

Death Row might be ready for Owen Williams, but he fears he is not quite ready for it. "It is going to be scary being there in a cell with a man whose future is in my hands, and if I don't do everything I can be will die – and even if I do everything I can he may also die," said Mr Williams. However, such visits may be rare, as he will mainly be working on federal appeals, arguing that particular cases are unconstitutional.

He may find the blood-thirsty free Americans scarier than the convicts but he has his arguments for clemency down pat. "I do not deny that many of the people on Death Row are guilty but some are innocent and many of them are educationally subnormal and mentally disturbed. Some are juveniles and others have not had the benefit of a decent standard of legal representation. I accept that victims' families have suffered a huge loss – I'm fortunate I have never lost anyone to violent crime – but it cannot be right to be the lives of such people," he said.

Part of the reason Mr Williams will be working with the NAACP is that the death penalty in America is predominantly the plight of poor blacks. A study by Professor David Baldus in Georgia in the 1980s found that a black man convicted of killing a white man was 10 times more likely to be executed than a white man who has killed a black man.

There is no legal aid. Poor defendants on trial are entitled either to be assigned a public defender or a state appointed attorney, who will have tendered for the work for next to nothing. Rates as low as \$1.40 (90p) an hour have been known.

It is a point that rankles Mr Williams. "If you take the OJ Simpson case, had he been poor and only able to afford a state attorney, he might have been found guilty and, because the victims were white, he would probably have got the death penalty."

Matthew Brace

# "LONDON'S ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE CITIES. BUT I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO ABOUT IT."

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SELFRIDGES

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# When wine leaves a sour taste

You shouldn't have to be an expert to feel confident about sending back a bottle you are not enjoying, writes Richard Ehrlich

YOU HAVE placed your wine order and the bottle arrives. You are chosen to perform the ritual of tasting it. You lift glass to lips, take a sip, and try politely to restrain the gagging reflex. It tastes like lighter fluid.

What happens next is up to you. You must decide whether to complain, and how far to take it. A mild query? A bold refusal to drink or pay? As we supposedly become a nation of restaurant-sophisticates, the question of complaining about wine remains as thorny as ever.

Not that wine writer and television presenter Alice King and her husband Nick Davies had any doubts about what to do. Yesterday, it emerged that Miss King, author of the *Hamlyn Atlas of Wine*, has been banned from a restaurant in Marlborough, Wiltshire, after she complained and would not pay for a £16 bottle of Beaujolais, because it "lacked fruit and tasted dried out".

They stood their ground, and at one point the row became so heated that other customers, who were asked their opinion of the wine by the manager, backed the restaurant and urged the King party to pay up. Another diner, who liked the wine, even chased Miss King and her party down the street, hurling abuse.

So, how can such a dispute be settled? The law on wine (and food) in restaurants is quite clear, being governed by the Trade Description Act (1968) and Sale of Goods Act (1979), among other acts of Parliament. The goods must be of satisfactory quality, fit for the purpose and as described on the menu. But problems abound despite that apparent simplicity. Customer says: "my wine tastes like something poured from a fish tank." Waiter says: "this wine is delicious." Who's right?

There is one clear case in which wine may be returned: when it's "corked", tainted by a fungus that occurs naturally

in some cork trees. Corked wine is akin to rancid butter or shoes with a hole in the toe – clearly unfit for use. It's worth noting, however, that I've watched people drink corked wine and not notice the fact.

The problems are trickier when the wine is alleged merely to be not as good as it should be, as in the case of Miss King, or when customers order the wrong bottle out of sheer ignorance – "We didn't know Cava has bubble" – or when they simply decide that they don't like it. When it's a simple question of not liking the stuff, the law would be on the restaurant's side.

But the restaurateurs I talked to were unanimous in proclaiming a generous attitude, even when the customer is wrong. Georgina Thompson, of London restaurant 755, says they get a complaint once every couple of months. "If there's a genuine fault with the bottle," she points out, "we can always send it back to the supplier. And if there isn't anything wrong with it, it's better to have a satisfied customer than one who is not. Satisfied customers come back."

Michael Gottlieb, proprietor of the Smolensky restaurants and Café Spice Namaste in London, agrees with that point of view. "It doesn't happen often, but when people complain about a bottle we replace it without question. And sometimes give a couple of glasses of free dessert wine just to make sure they are happy. Our first priority is to look after customer."

That is also the view of Barry Phillips, of the White Horse in Chigwell, West Sussex. His list, one of the most extensive in the country, includes dozens of bottles of great rarity and antiquity. So he does have to contend with complaints about expensive wines – and they seem to be delivered in the nicest possible way.

"We had to take back three bottles of La Tâche '71", he recalls. "I think it cost £300 the

last time we sold it. One bottle was out of condition, yet the customer insisted on paying part of the price. Another bottle was bought by someone who tasted it and said, 'I don't mind paying, but do I have to drink it?'

Friendly customers make it easy to be gracious, but despite the higher sums at stake, the White Horse policy mirrors Gottlieb's. "We want people to be happy and comfortable. Someone sent back a magnum of Krug '79 [around £350] because he thought it was flat, and we accepted it."

I hope you never find yourself in Alice King's position. But if you do, there are four points to bear in mind. First, you have to decide how much palaver you are going to tolerate in making your complaint. Some people, faced with a waiter who refused to take back a bottle, would give up – or just deduct the service charge, which is their legal right.

Second, in making your complaint, deliver it quietly and without pretence. "Waiters hate customers who show off," says one hard-bitten veteran. Third, if you think the wine is in that legal grey area – not really spoiled, but not nice to drink – make it clear that you understand this is a matter of opinion. And if it's a perfectly good bottle but just not to your taste, throw yourself on the waiter's mercy.

The fourth point arises only when fistcuffs are threatened: when the restaurant won't back down, and neither will you. As Gottlieb says: "If you are a customer and you believe you are right, stick to your guns. Tell the restaurateur: 'It's my right not to pay for wine I think is faulty, I am not going to pay, and I'll see you in court.'

That approach will not make your evening a relaxed one but it will make it interesting.

*Richard Ehrlich is drink writer on The Independent on Sunday and recently won the Glenfiddich award for drink writer of the year.*



The nose has it: And if it doesn't smell right, send it back

Photograph: Philip Meech

## BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE TIPPLE

Two thirds of the adult population of Britain drink wine – more than twice as many drinkers of any other alcoholic drink.

The British spend £5.85bn on wine each year. £2.82bn of which is spent while dining out.

Around 678m litres of wine were sold in Britain in 1996 – a rise of 16 per cent since 1992.

Red and rosé wines have overtaken whites in popularity, with their sales expanding by 55 per cent since 1992. By the year 2001, they will account for 55 per cent of the market.

German white wine remains the single most popular choice – Portuguese is least popular.

British wines account for only 4.2 per cent of sales.

The biggest drinkers of wine are aged between 35 and 44 years old.

The wine market is forecast to rise by 25 per cent by the year 2001.

Around 9.8m cases of wine are imported from France each year, as a result of their negligible duty on alcohol.

Only 6.6 per cent of the wine-drinking public choose non-alcoholic varieties.

Source: Mintel

## Twelve months later he's still man of the moment

In our final article, Colin Brown says that Tony Blair is putting a very personal stamp on his premiership



TONY BLAIR was in a relaxed mood at the leaving party in Number 10 this week for Tim Allen, one of his press office team, who reflected on the "gaffes" of the year.

They included the report of the change in the Blair hairdo, a "scoop" for the *Financial Times*. Mr Blair could afford to enjoy the joke at his expense – by common consent, from his ministerial colleagues to his severest critics on Labour's left wing, he had had a remarkably successful year. "It has been Tony's year," said one.

Some of the "gaffes" were of Labour's own making, but Mr Blair has suffered no permanent damage from the presentation debacle over Bernie Ecclestone's £1m and party funding. He successfully put that behind him and went on to speak for the country on the death of the Princess of Wales. He also captured the moment at the signing of the Good Friday settlement, which he had personally been responsible for brokering to bring the hope of peace to Northern Ireland.

It was not a moment for soundbites, he said. But he felt



the "hand of history" on his shoulder. Those telling lines, delivered with an actor's skill, again captured the moment.

Cabinet figures dismiss reports that he has been humiliating some ministers in front of the rest of the Cabinet. "He doesn't do that. It's just not his style. He can be challenging, but he doesn't humiliate colleagues," said one senior Cabinet source.

"Absolutely outstanding,"

was how one seasoned appratchik described Mr Blair's

performance over the past 12 months. "He is an outstanding Prime Minister, probably better than Wilson and Macmillan and Thatcher."

The only question is about his strategic view – we still don't really know where he stands, on the welfare state, Europe, or trade union recognition.

Mr Blair's close Cabinet colleagues deny that charge. One said he had made up his mind some time ago what the Government would be saying on trade union recognition; the ministers and the trade unions would follow. His friends say he

has continued to lead from the front, exercising his authority on the Chancellor on the approach to the European single currency.

"I've seen them all – Wilson, Macmillan, Thatcher, Major – and he's right up there with them," said another veteran Labour left-winger. "He hasn't got Wilson's memory; he is a peace-maker, he doesn't go for the jugular, but he is brilliant at Prime Minister's questions."

Mr Blair was advised by one regular Labour voice at the weekly sessions of Prime Minister's questions to "lighten" his approach to William Hague. "He was sounding raty, so I told him not to take Hague so seriously. It seems to have worked. He is much more relaxed now."

He was in the tearoom last week, jollying the troops after Prime Minister's questions.

"They are in awe of him," said another Labour MP about the new intake of '97. Even some of the press who bemoaned John Major with tough questions find Mr Blair difficult to fault.

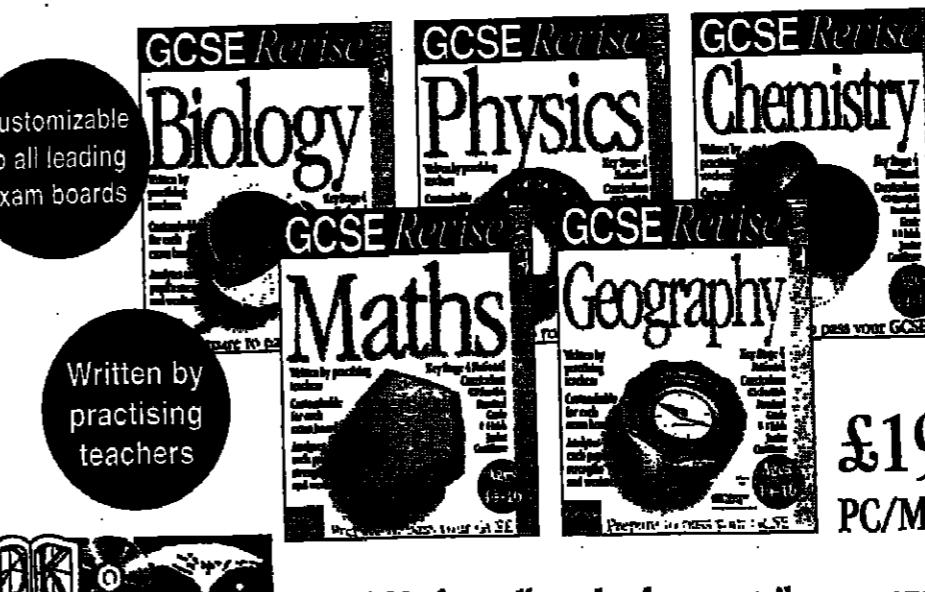
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## Mary Bell: time to step back

A NEW LAW to stop criminals profiting from their crimes should not be "beyond the wits of parliamentary draftsmen", says the Attorney General, John Morris. Well, they are clever people, these parliamentary draftsmen. Although there is already such a law, banning such cashing-in within six years of the crime, extending it is a tough assignment. It is a moral conundrum that would tax the wisdom of Solomon, not just the textual skills of a legal wordsmith.

Mary Bell has already given her name to a part of common law, the so-called "Mary Bell order", which prevents the identification of a child, in her case, her child, now that she has changed her name. Now the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and the Attorney General have combined to suggest that she should have an Act of Parliament named after her. Perhaps it should be called the Mary Bell (Profit from Crimes) (Prevention in Perpetuity) Act, 1998. It is disappointing that our political leaders should reflect our national confusions and hypocrisies rather than seeking to make sense of them and offering moral leadership.

Compare public attitudes to Mary Bell and Leslie Grantham. Bell, a deeply damaged child, became murderer at the age of 11. Grantham, a soldier in Germany, shot a taxi driver dead during an attempted robbery. Her crime is still "live", 30 years on, capable of tainting anything that comes into contact with it, particularly money. His crime, committed at around the same time, is "spent", and only lends a faintly glamorous hue to his reputation as a hard-man actor. Sure, he is a good actor, and 405 episodes of *EastEnders* as Dirty Den would have made him a national figure anyway, but there was added cachet for his tabloid persona, that strange mixture of soap fiction and soap reality, from the fact that he was a convicted murderer. It would take a particularly skilled parliamentary draftsman to devise a law which could identify and sequester that proportion of Mr Grantham's earnings which is attributable to the publicity generated by his crime.

The problem is that we are prone to sentimentality when it comes to salt-of-the-earth, gone-straight-now-villains. "Mad" Frankie Fraser, not just a murderer but – in his day – an evil torturer and butcher, is advertising some drink or other. Anyone associated with the Krays or the Great Train Robbers is seen as a harmless reformed hoodlum, respectful of their mothers, who only ever hurt their own kind.

Mary Bell's crime still seems so evil because it is so hard to understand. Mr Grantham's crime, on the other hand, is easy to understand, a straightforward piece of villainy. Yes, her victims were children, and crimes against children are more abhorrent than those against adults. But the moral judgement in comparing the two crimes surely needs to focus on the ages of the perpetrators. Bell was herself a child. The extent of her culpability is arguable: we should of course be sceptical of her own account, as told to Gitta Sereny, of the abuse she suffered as a child – especially, in the light of what we now know about "recovered" memories, the sexual abuse. But Mr Grantham's culpability is clear-cut. He was an adult, when he knowingly shot an innocent man.

On any dispassionate reckoning, her crime is more "spent" than his. She should not profit from it – not that, in the broader sense, she has, having only succeeded in tipping herself and her daughter into misery. This should be an opportunity to reflect on our attitude to old crimes. Instead of giving tacit encouragement to tabloid harassments, the Government should be trying to lead the debate into cooler, more rational waters. It is true that time does not always heal, and that some crimes can never be forgotten.



gotten and forgiven. In the worst cases, it is worth pursuing war criminals, 50 years on. It was also right to punish Eric Taylor, the 75-year-old Roman Catholic priest, convicted this week, who sexually abused children at his orphanage in the Sixties. It was right yesterday to send Edward Kelly down for life for kicking a man in the head. The judge did not like it, but the sentence was automatic under Michael Howard's "two strikes and you're out" law because Kelly had shot and injured someone in a robbery 19 years ago.

The most important lesson of the Mary Bell case is not that "crime should not pay". The lesson that matters is that rehabilitating criminals is a delicate and difficult business, which requires all of us and politicians especially, to make considered moral judgements, case by case, rather than hiding behind popular clichés.

## Black-cool irony

IS BLACKPOOL tacky? The people who run the Golden Mile pleasure beach are certainly worried that we might think so. Apparently, this is the fault of the BBC, which made an unflattering fly-on-the-wall programme about our most famous resort. "That wretched documentary showed us back into the Dark Ages again as unsophisticated, brash, Northern entertainment," says Amanda Thompson, whose 95-year-old grandmother runs the family firm.

The Prime Minister is also to blame, kiss-me-quick hats and black padding being deemed too Old Britannia for New Labour. "Suddenly they're too posh to come to Blackpool when they get power," Miss Thompson laments bitterly. But Blackpool is fighting back, using Labour's chosen weapon, public relations. We don't know what well-paid consultant suggested tipping a load of sand on London Euston's soulless marble concourse, but as a stunt it drew attention to the new attractions.

It is tempting to say that they sound remarkably similar to the old attractions – "live entertainment", "hot ice" shows. It certainly does not add up to a "New Black-cool". But nor should it. There are some things that we have to accept are simply impervious to the attentions of the image makers. The only thing Blackpool can do is to wait for the attentions of ironic post-modernists. It can then exploit a dual market – the traditional if declining Wakes weeks Northern workers and a second, complementary group, whose palates have become jaded with the tastes of Tuscany and Provence and would welcome the invigoration and novelty of a bag of chips on the tram.



The Venetian Lagoon, from which the city arose and into which it could sink again – see letter below right

Photograph: Sportphoto

### Gays and the church

THE REV Guy Davies (letter, 28 April) opposes homosexual behaviour, but fails to admit the existence of homosexual people. I spent over 30 years trying to make myself fit the Church's traditional framework of sexual teaching and the more I tried, the more my gay feelings came through, even though I never put them into practice. Eventually the discovery of a genetic link with gayness opened my eyes: I was fighting my own nature and trying to correct the way God made me.

A good God cannot have created in us a powerful gay sex drive just to punish us for acting on it. For me therefore it follows that the few Bible passages (none from Christ) condemning gay conduct reflect a heterosexual attitude, not the mind of God.

Mrs Davies asks us to look wider and see that the Bible's teaching throughout is consistent that sex is for married male/female couples only. But the Bible's teaching throughout is consistent that the earth is stationary and flat. Science has since shown us that God made the earth a moving ball and that he made some people gay. These discoveries change our perspective.

"God made all human beings in his own image" means homosexuality is part of that image as well as heterosexuality. "Love your neighbour as yourself" calls for equal treatment of gays here and now. And "First remove the block from your own eye" requires Church leaders to start the process.

TIM BEACH  
London SE25

THE REV Guy A Davies (letter, 28 April) states that sex is for married couples alone and that the church is being cowed by the homosexual lobby. May one ask to which marriage he may refer – the first, second or perhaps even third?

Being cowed by the "second marriage" lobby is possibly a lot more popular among church members, and sitting in the pews with serial adulterers a lot less uncomfortable than letting in gays.

ROBERT SENECA  
London EC1

THE REV Neil Dawson uses your column to vilify the Maranatha Community (letter, 20 April). We have never met him. We are not "shadowy" as he suggests. We are a free and open movement. We are not "right-wing" as he suggests. We are a rapidly growing community of thousands of Christians drawn from every political persuasion and Christian denomination.

DENNIS WRIGLEY  
Community Leader  
Maranatha Community  
Manchester

ACCORDING to the Rev Neil Dawson's letter (28 April), Leviticus 18: 22 merely forbids homosexuality as "ritually unclean" and therefore is not a timeless moral principle. However, if we take Leviticus 18 as a whole we see that the chapter is concerned to forbid Israel from engaging in illicit sexual practices that were known among the Canaanite nations. The chapter prohibits various kinds of incest and bestiality. Presumably Mr. Dawson would condemn both incest and bestiality. Why the special pleading for homosexuality?

The word translated "abominations" in Leviticus 18 does not only deal with matters of ritual impurity but also with moral evil. The same word is used to describe child sacrifice and idolatry in Deuteronomy 18.

The teaching on sexual morality in Leviticus 18 is not repealed in the

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

New Testament. Paul explicitly condemns both lesbianism and homosexuality in Romans 1: 26ff. Homosexual practices are clearly contrary to the teaching of the whole Bible. It is the business of the church to both proclaim God's judgement against all sin and to offer people of all sexual orientations the forgiveness and wholeness that Jesus Christ offers in the gospel.

THE REV GUY A DAVIES  
Sturminster Newton, Dorset

Heard Mary Bell's cry  
IN YOUR leading article about Mary Bell (30 April) you state "We have learned nothing from the book that would stop such crimes happening." This is not the case.

If people who have been similarly abused read Gitta Sereny's book or excepts they will realise they are not alone. They will be given a language to use to describe their abuse and permission to express it. This is the first step towards them seeking help and thus breaking the cycle of abuse to abuser.

We may not want to hear about this abuse but our deaf ears are the ones to which Mary and many thousands of others have directed their unheard cries in the past. It is our responsibility to learn how to listen.

DR MARION WELLS  
Maldon, Essex

Beef-on-the-bone peril  
JACK CUNNINGHAM was absolutely right to protect the public from the dangers of BSE-infected bone marrow. It is most unfortunate that the powerful meat and farming lobbies are attempting to overturn this wise precaution ("Farmers hail court ruling over beef on bone case", 22 April), and unfortunate too that the public are largely kept in the dark about the case to be made for the ban.

There are actually very good scientific grounds for this ban:

• The transmissible spongiform encephalopathies show a concentration of infectivity in the nervous and lymphoid tissue, including the bone marrow.

• Infectivity is found in the nerves and lymphoid tissue at an early stage in the infection, before it is detectable in the brain. Infected bone marrow could be present in the cattle aged under 30 months currently being eaten.

• When beef is cooked on the bone, any infectivity will be spread throughout the meat and the gravy – it is not sufficient to avoid eating the marrow itself.

• The absurdly low level of risk

bandied about now has almost certainly come from the Ministry of Agriculture (Maff) via the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee, and Maff has a record of consistently making unjustifiably optimistic assumptions of risk. The calculations are very difficult, and in truth nobody really knows.

The right time to lift the ban on beef-on-the-bone would be when a test for BSE, not available at present, was able to demonstrate with confidence that our food was no longer contaminated by a potentially lethal and currently incurable disease.

ADRIAN HOLME  
London N7

DR H C GRANT (letter, 25 April) gives the mistaken impression that antibiotic residues are present in milk and advises readers to buy produce from organic farmers.

Dairy cows receive antibiotics when there is a need to treat illness, for example mastitis, and this is done under veterinary supervision. By law, milk produced by treated cows must be withheld from the bulk supply for an appropriate length of time to ensure that the milk is free from antibiotics. Milk is routinely tested at all stages, from farm to dairy, and there are heavy financial penalties for farmers whose milk fails these tests.

ANITA BOURNE  
Press Officer  
National Dairy Council  
London W1

Algeria's agony

ROBERT FISK draws attention to the danger in Algeria of civilians armed and supported by the state ("Militias implicated in Algeria's reign of terror", 23 April). Recent atrocious massacres appear to have woken the international community to the appalling situation in Algeria, upon which Amnesty International has been reporting for more than six years.

One of the few ways to break the cycle of such violence is to set up impartial and public enquiries and bring those responsible for killings, torture and other abuses to justice, whoever they may be. The Algerian government has not done this. The international community has had the opportunity to take action. But it has not done so.

The international community could have acted through the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR), whose annual meeting in Geneva ended on 24 April. But none of the 53 member states (including the UK) apparently felt able to take the lead and

for more than six years.

RAFAEL L BRAS  
Head, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

"I'm delighted my shows have gone down so well here. It probably means they are equally incomprehensible in any language." — Harry Enfield, comedian, after being given the top comedy award at the Montreux TV festival.

"I might well use 'new!' in my slogan, but I certainly wouldn't use 'New'." — Ken Livingstone, distinctly Old Labour MP and breeder of amphibians, on his prospects of becoming London mayor.

"A drunk man is more likely to find a woman attractive. So, if all else fails, get him drunk." — Dr Patrick McGhee, who coaches women on dating techniques.

### Protecting Venice

MICHAEL McCARTHY'S report (21 April) highlighted the threat of catastrophic flooding facing Venice. For nearly two years I chaired the international panel of experts that supervised the preparation of the environmental impact statement for the proposed movable gates that would protect the lagoon against high tides and storm surges. We could not agree more with the conclusion that inaction endangers the city and the rest of the lagoon environment.

Unfortunately, I most strongly disagree with statements attributed to Professor Edmund Penning-Rowell. The gates are the only solution to long range flooding. They will protect the whole lagoon against flooding; they respect the commercial activity of the lagoon; they benefit the environment by protecting against flood; and they provide the opportunity to increase, through operation, circulation and water quality in the lagoon.

Professor Penning-Rowell asks, "What happens when the gates have to be closed every day, as they will?" It is very reasonable to assume that the relative sea level will be 20cm higher a hundred years from now. At that point the gates would have to be closed 70 times a year for 250 hours. That is accounting for false alarms. If we were to assume a rise of 50cm in the next 100 years, consistent with some of the predictions of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the above situation would be reached in 50 years. Although frequent, the closures would be far from permanent. A life of 50 to 100 years for such an engineered solution is very reasonable.

The article suggests "small-scale local flood defence works" as an alternative to the gates. Such works, called "insulae" are already under construction. These raised walls on the perimeters of many small islands are being built to their maximum feasible elevation without being physically and aesthetically intrusive. They will significantly reduce the number of gate closures required under medium flood conditions, but cannot possibly protect the city and lagoon against the extreme and most damaging flood events.

If indeed the worst of the sea level rise scenarios do occur, the movable gates provide protection and time for the Italian and world community to react. The present design includes locks to permit emergency transit even while the gates are closed. If sea level rises ever to force permanent closure 100 or more years from now, the gates would not only have served their purpose but would provide the platform to implement the only solution possible: gates and locks. Ask the Dutch about their successful experience!

The gates are made of steel, not concrete, and are invisible except during operations. The cost quoted is too high by at least a factor of two. With the correct numbers the gates will not be a "waste of money".

RAFAEL L BRAS  
Head, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

### Surgeons no fat cats

TIMOTHY RAGGATT QC believes that his taxable income of £190,000 is the same as a consultant surgeon ("Top lawyers get £500,000 a year from legal aid", 29 April). He is seriously wrong. The NHS salary of a consultant is a maximum of £54,000. The average private practice income of a consultant surgeon is £35,000.

JEFFREY C McILWAIN FRCS  
St Helens & Knowsley Hospitals  
Merseyside

## Jarvis Cocker's mum is a Tory — and he will be one, too



DAVID AARONOVITCH  
REVERTING  
TO TYPE

I AM so glad that Jarvis Cocker's mum is a Tory. Not just for poor old William Hague's sake, but because it confirms something that I've always suspected about pop stars. The ones from working-class Labour backgrounds will go all materialistic and practical, leaving the vicars' sons and managing directors' daughters to proclaim their disgust with society, and their solidarity with anything remotely struggling.

Jarvis, it transpires, was also a Cub Scout, who passed some of his tenderest years in saluting the flag, singing hymns and collecting badges for various arcane skills involving string. Mum, a pillar of society clearly, is not only a Tory but will — next week — contest the parish elections in the small Nottinghamshire village of Carlton-in-Lindrick on behalf of the party of Thatcher, Major, Churchill and Widcombe. She recalls how sweet the young Cocker was in his, er, wobbles. Or were they toggles?

Whatever they were, it set me to wondering what other embarrassing secrets might be out there. I have no evidence for this, but I like to think that the mother of Chumbawumba's fearsome anarchist, Dambert Nobacon, is actually a fluffy-haired, cologne sprayed old lady with pearls, inhabiting a cottage in Surrey, whose views are very far to the right of the man over whom this dutiful son tipped that barrel of ice water a month or so ago.

Ten to one, groups with names like The Putrescent Matriarchs or Stab The Bitch all trip home at weekends to have their laundry done by doting mummies, and to catch up with the Gymkhana news. By Sunday they are back in Willesden, snorting lines and entertaining *NME* journalists with their radical rejection of smoochy T Blair and rotten ol' Cool Britannia.

And then what happens, eh? I'll tell you what happens — they revert. If you were once at college with Trotskyists, do you ever wonder what became of them?

All those magnificent phrases and that adamantine certainty, surely they are — even now — laying up underground caches of weapons, or abroad, fighting in a steamy jungle somewhere for peasant freedom?

Of course not. They are now, most of them, midd managers at Tesco's, tax consultants or astrologers. You will come across them in the business section of Waterstones, where they will admit that they voted Conservative at the last election, but mostly as a protest at the synthetic nature of New Labour.

So what am I saying here? Merely that (yawn) we all become more right-wing as we get older? That rebellion loses its attraction when there's a mortgage to pay, or that burglars seem less like the armed wing of the dispossessed when they break into your house, and steal your collection of Santana CDs?

No. That is not my argument. When, earlier, I used the word "revert", that was exactly what I meant. Those who were born into suburban semis, went to church and were taught that manners maketh man, will — despite the violence of their adolescent rejection of this world — be tugged back to that world. The values — no, even the words — of their parents will be born again in them. And the same will happen for left-wingers too.

Apparently one of the best guides to adult voting behaviour is still to examine the political allegiance of the parents. The rationale for the decision may be entirely different, but the outcome will tend to be the same. Examine too the phrases that pass down the generations inside families. Does your five year old say things that your great granny told her daughter? Are some of your most private moments coloured by the words of long dead generations? Or is it just me?

If you think that this view is over-determinist, then consider the experience of Radio 4. Some years ago the strategists at the former Home Service decided to take a look at the demographics of their channel. What they discovered alarmed them. Very few of the listeners, it transpired, were under 40.

The strategists took out their pocket calculators and did their sums. They worked out that aging and natural attrition would mean that within twenty years or so they would have no audience left. One day a skeletal Humphreys and a senile Naughtie would find themselves cackling dementedly from a cobwebbed studio to a tiny audience entirely composed of centenarians. An entirely new plan had to be devised to attract "younger listeners".

And then, as the redundancy notices for Melvyn Bragg and all the actors from *The Archers* were being composed, the youngest strategist (who had been quietly chewing her pencil at the back of the room for six months) suddenly shouted "stop!" Had anyone considered, she asked, the possibility that maybe the reason that the Radio 4 attracted so many over 40s, was because the over 40s liked it. In other words, that when people got to 40, along with golf, aromatherapy and discussing car routes, they just sort of slipped into Radio 4?

They went back and checked the research and saw that she was right. Listeners whose parents had themselves listened to Radio 4 — whose 4ness was established in childhood — would (after intervening periods of Radio 1 and various commercial stations) revert. Like Mum they too would listen to *The Archers*. Oh Jarvis, what a wonderful past stretches before you!

## The downside of the pill that's billed as an up



JEREMY LAURANCE  
ON TOP OF A  
NEW PROBLEM

A GREAT deal of nonsense has been talked about Viagra, the cure for male impotence, launched in the US this week. Billed variously as the answer to men's prayers, the answer to women's prayers (a hard man is good to find, as Mac West observed) and the fastest selling drug in history, it is a victim of self-generated hype, born aloft on the hopes and fears of millions of people obsessed by the notion that they may be missing out in our sex-crazed world.

Viagra certainly appears to have a vroom-vroom effect, boosting manly vigour and self-image. It has even achieved the ultimate American accolade —

top billing on the cover of *Time* magazine. It is clearly the answer to Pfizer's prayers, the pharmaceutical company fortunate to have stumbled across it. Early studies in students in 1991 of its potential as a heart drug revealed it had a pleasing side effect. The share price has since responded like the target organ.

But the prospects for this diamond-shaped magic bullet are not all good. In the exuberance that has surrounded its launch, the downside of a world in which every man, from 18 to 80, can feel like an Arnold Schwarzenegger has been missed. Below are ten reasons why, when the drug authorities in Britain consider giving Viagra a licence, as they are expected to do in the autumn, they should pause.

1. The market for Ferrari Testarossa will be destroyed at a stroke. Which man will bother to trump up £350,000 when for £25.00 he can obtain the same boost to his image?

2. Marriage guidance counsellors will be in disarray. Why go through all that tearful inquiry and tricky conciliation when a glass of water and a quick swallow can guarantee repeated bliss?

3. Viagra is said to aid performance by blocking an enzyme that causes erections to

subside, thus strengthening and prolonging them. Expect, therefore, a new urban scare: predatory women spiking men's drinks. It could give a new meaning to the term "lager'd up".

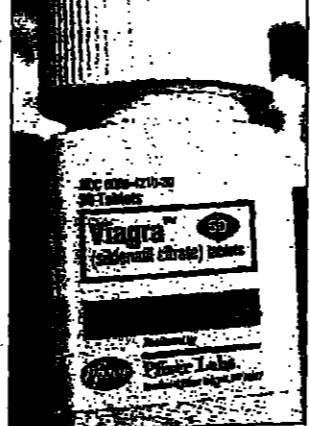
4. Improved performance will lead to more sex and more demand for sex. Is this what the world needs? This is a delicate matter and no one wishes to be branded a killjoy. But consider: we have an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, abortions are at record levels and the world faces a population explosion. Bromide, Viagra, no.

5. A black market for the pill is already in full swing in the United States. Internet sites and telephone lines have been established for those desperate for a fix. A stronger and better erection has an appeal far beyond the one-in-twenty men estimated to be impotent. Barbers may once again begin inquiring awkwardly whether sir would be needing something for the weekend.

6. Evidence is emerging of abuse. Some students are reported to have increased the dose from the recommended one tablet taken an hour before sex to two or three. One researcher suggested people without sexual dysfunction would be using it five or six times a

night. "They will take it too frequently and at too high a dose and get into big trouble," he said, leaving it annoyingly unclear what "big trouble" meant.

7. The pill has side effects. The first man in Britain to take it, the director of a Harley Street clinic that is offering the drug on a private basis to selected patients, described how it made his head swell up in-



stead of the other part of his anatomy. Other men have reported headaches, indigestion and a blue tinge to their vision. But there is a still more serious problem — its effect on the already swollen male ego. A pill that leads to exaggerated displays of male potency will not make the world a better place.

8. Impotence increases with

age. While Viagra may bring increased enjoyment to the younger generation, its target market is older men. Once men of 80 perform as if they were 18 again, what of the impact on relations between the sexes? And on the divorce rate? More sex at greater ages will have a destabilising effect on the social fabric.

9. An estimated six-out-of-ten men with impotence do not seek treatment because they do not believe there is anything that can be done. As news about the wonder drug spreads, family doctors will find their surgeries bulging with men elbowing out the anti-natal classes and the vaccination clinics.

10. This is a pill that improves the mechanics of sex. It will rightly be viewed with suspicion by women who think men's chief failing is that they regard sex as a mechanical process. Men who have difficulty with sex are aiming for the wrong thing if they treat it as a mechanical failure.

11. Reasons add up to a poor prospect for a drug on which such hopes are built. And despite being misleadingly labelled the "good love pill", Viagra is not an aphrodisiac. It boosts the male erection — but only when the spirit is willing. In this respect it differs from existing drugs, injected or insert-

## Beware politicians on the Internet, as they find forms of manipulation



TREVOR PHILLIPS  
ELECTRONIC DEMAGOGUES

PLEASE don't do it again, boys. There are several things that political leaders should not try out in public, like dancing, riding a penny-farthing or standing too close to Cydes Brandrell. These activities, unless carried out expertly and with panache, are guaranteed to generate public scorn and ridicule.

This week, the efforts of Messrs Hague and Blair to top one another in the realm of cyberspace democracy were worthy but should not be repeated unless and until everyone has had some lessons. Mr Blair's unfamiliarity with a keyboard was manifest; his advisers wisely told him to let Sir David Frost and his minions do the typing. Mr Hague knows his way around a computer, probably from the McKinsey days; he tried to top the Prime Minister by typing his answers in real time. His problem is that though he can cope with real time he still has problems with real people who ask awkward questions about the euro.

This is the age of enhanced democracy. We want our public figures constantly to be interrogated and tested in public. A few politicians are responding to this. The Labour MP Barbara Follett, has established a system of consulting groups in her constituency on most big items of government policy, face-to-face. She brings together all the people who have written to her on a particular subject, plus all the local interest groups, and they thrash out the issues, agree a line if they can and send it in writing to the relevant minister. It sounds painful, but is probably enlightening. But not all MPs have Ms Follett's energy and resources; many would shudder at the idea of regular contact with their constituency busybodies.

That is why the Blair-Hague efforts this week to do democracy at a distance is so interesting. As an effort to demonstrate that computers can work in the service of democracy neither stunt quite came off; but they did neatly point to one possible future for democracy. The pushbutton democracy, where we make decisions instantly and collectively, may be just around the corner.



Off the box: David Frost interviewing the Prime Minister on the Internet

Photograph: PA

and settle pointless arguments quickly and decisively?

And there are other attractions. At present, because we cannot have referendums every day, we must elect governments, local and national, of which we only broadly approve; we may dislike many of their specific policies, but we have no choice about which ones we can reject once we have put the tick by the name. Pushbutton democracy would allow us to say which aspects of a party's platform we dislike; the elected representative would come into office knowing what bits of the manifesto to leave at the front door.

Above all, in the post-ideological age, the pushbutton democracy could be the instrument that frees us from the tyranny of the party. If we the people, possess the means to direct policy on a weekly, even daily basis, surely all that we need are effective and honest managers? Their job should be to give us the stakeholders as much information as we need to make our decisions, and then to carry out those decisions quickly and effectively.

This is a New Britain vision of democracy. It whirs, it hums and its graphics are bright and cheerful. For the prophets of the Information Age, it is Nirvana. There are, of course, bound to be transitional problems. Maybe not everyone has the gear; but the answer to that is simple: IBM, Microsoft and BT join with the government to wire up every household in the UK.

ing a technophile, I persuaded London Weekend TV to purchase a new digital editing system that was twice as fast as the systems then in use. The idea was that we could cut editing time in half and save wads of money which could then be used to pay more journalists to deliver more and better stories. Some hope; what it actually did was enable directors and editors to tinker with their films twice as much. We got better-looking films, but we saved little money. The point is that given more choices, most of us will use the opportunity to dither.

Another worrying aspect of the pushbutton democracy is that it removes the time to reflect. If you have e-mail, you will by now be used to the morning routine of opening your online mailbox to discover a dozen or more messages — all of which have to be answered immediately. It certainly makes us talk — but what are we saying? Are we sending considered responses — or are we simply getting the e-mails off our list of things to do? Today we all expect the e-mail to come winging its way back within hours, if not minutes. The same would be true of a system where the government could consult the citizen every hour of the day; you could be sure that the politicians would make the process one that prevented informed choice rather than enhanced it.

The greatest problem with the pushbutton democracy is that its very speed and convenience would make our political currency emotional impact rather than rational argument. Quick decisions based on minimum knowledge give advantages to demagogues, populists and opportunists. Maybe that's what we deserve.

I could just about live, I guess with the modern equivalent of Pericles; but what happens if the machines give sway to a true master of the gut instinct, someone who was a perfect conduit for mass emotion rather than a filter of the people's will? Can you imagine Cyber Prime Minister Jerry Springer? Pull the plugs now, I say.

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## Dominique Aury

ONE of the masterpieces of erotic sadomasochistic fiction is Pauline Réage's *Histoire d'O*. It was published in 1954 by Jean-Jacques Pauvert, a specialist in high-class literary pornography, and, in a ludicrously bad anonymous English translation, by the notorious Maurice Girodias in 1970. The novel created a tremendous sensation in those prudishly frivolous Fifties, and earned world-wide celebrity in 1975 as a movie by Jean-Jacques.

The popularity of the book and film was helped by the mystery surrounding the author, though her real name was an open secret in French literary circles. But it was not until 1984 that the true authorship of this sulphurous work of genius was revealed to a wider public, in a *New Yorker* essay extracted from a book by John de St Jorre about Girodias and his infamous Olympia Press, entitled *The Good Ship Venus: the erotic*

*voyage of the Olympia Press*. St Jorre had interviewed Réage during his researches, and "unmasked" her as Dominique Aury, an influential journalist and editor who had long worked for French magazines and publishers. She had been on Gallimard's reading committee and general secretary of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* since 1953, as well as jury member for various important literary prizes including the Fémina since 1963.

"Dominique Aury" was itself a pseudonym, derived from the maiden name of her mother, Louise Auriocoste. Her father was Auguste Descloux, a professor, and his daughter was baptised Anne Descloux. She graduated from the Sorbonne with a degree in English, and started work at the Paris-based Teachers' College of Columbia University, between 1933 and 1939. After the defeat of France she found work as a translator

and journalist on *Lettres Françaises*, from 1942 to 1946, and after the Liberation began her long career as publisher's reader and editor.

It was while she was working for Gallimard that her love affair with one of its leading writers and editors, Jean Paulhan, began. He married, and in order to preserve her liaison with him Aury took up a challenge he, with typical French male macho condescension, had thrown at her: "No woman could ever write a truly erotic novel."

Knowing his passion for the writings of de Sade, she plunged into a study of the Divine Marquis in order to find inspiration for a series of love letters in novel form. "I wasn't very pretty, I was no longer young" – she was in her late forties – "so my pen was the only weapon I had left with which to lure him back."

Three months later, she sent Paulhan her typescript, which he

called in his preface "the most ardent love letter that any man has ever received".

At the end of the long, hot summer, he returned to her in Paris, where he gave the text to his close friend the publisher Pauvert, who was at once enthusiastic. He already knew Aury as a critic and translator of the highest quality, and found her novel of the same distinguished literary style, even when it was describing the most depraved and self-abusing sexual acts ever performed by a woman enslaved to a pitiless and insatiable master in the arts of Eros. Indeed, the very beauty of the prose gave those deranged and dangerous acts of lascivious passion an added piquancy, sadly lacking in the abysmal English version.

Aury had not intended the book to become a cheap shocker, for she conceived it as a true work of art. But she did not want to distress her ageing par-

ents with its publication, so she insisted on a pseudonym. She chose "Pauline" in homage to two of her great idols, Pauline Borghese and the 19th-century feminist-socialist Pauline Roland, who in 1848 was a militant advocate of the emancipation of women. As for "Réage", she claimed she had picked it up from a catalogue.

But the spiteful Paris literary gossips had long since claimed that the pseudonym was an anagram (except for one letter, "H") of "Égérie Paulhan". As early as 1974, Aury had admitted, in an interview for *Elle*, that her identity had been revealed by a scandal rag. In 1990, even the stately columns of *Le Monde* announced that "Pauline Réage" was Dominique Aury.

Aury had not intended the book to become a permanent best-seller, translated into many languages. I have found versions of it in manga (comic strips) in Japanese "pink

porno" magazines, and in explicit *roman-photo* form. It has appeared in many exquisitely produced private editions, with illustrations in the vein of Aubrey Beardsley and Pierre Klossowski. Its beautiful prose, however, is what has made it a true classic.

Dominique Aury wrote good translations of British and American novels, for which she was awarded the Prix Denys-Clairouin. Her essays *Lecture pour tous* won the Grand Prix de la Critique in 1958. She was a white-haired sprightly septuagenarian when she started compiling her last work, a fine *Anthologie de la poésie religieuse française*, published in 1989.

James Kirkup

Anne Descloux (Dominique Aury), writer and translator: born Rochebelle-sur-Mer, France 23 September 1907; married Raymond d'Argis (one son; marriage dissolved); died 30 April 1998.



Aury: piquant eroticism

Photograph: Rex Features



Hayes with Grace Hayes, his mother, left, and Mary Healy in *Zs Boom Bah*, 1941. He married Healy the same year  
Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

## Peter Lind Hayes

"THE COW's gone dry and the hens won't lay, / The fish quit biting last Saturday, / Troubles pile up day by day, / And now I'm gettin' dandruff" Those lugubrious words are from "Life Gets Tee-Jus, Don't It?", the 1949 hit recorded by Peter Lind Hayes, whose long career encompassed virtually all the media.

He was only two when his father, Joseph Conrad Lind Sr, a railroad man and amateur singer, died. Peter attended parochial school in Cairo, Illinois, but, from the age of nine, performed every summer with his mother, Grace Hayes, a vaudeville star. At 16, he wrote a new act for his mother and himself; they appeared in it at New York's legendary vaudeville theatre the Palace.

In 1939, while Peter was working as a film stand-in, his mother built the Grace Hayes Lodge, a night-club in the San Fernando Valley. An instant success, the club attracted a large film-business clientele,

with mother and son starring in the floor-shows. Peter soon graduated from stand-in to film actor; in 1939 he appeared in *These Glamour Girls*, which starred (naturally) Lana Turner, and in *Million Dollar Legs*, which (equally naturally) starred Betty Grable.

Under contract to Paramount, he had just acted with Jackie Cooper in *Seventeen* (1940) when he met Mary Healy, who was under contract to 20th Century-Fox; they married the following year. Also in 1941, the newly weds appeared in *Zs Boom Bah*, a low-budget musical in which Grace Hayes also played, as a vaudeville star who buys her college student son (Peter) a cafe, which he turns into a successful night-club.

As Victor Mature's army buddy in *Seven Days' Leave* (1942), Hayes sang, danced and did impersonations of Ronald Colman, Lionel Barrymore and Charles Laughton. The day after completing the

film, he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps, and was assigned to the corps's Radio Production Unit, which wrote and presented daily broadcasts. Private Frank Loesser, writer, was also in the unit, and he and Hayes collaborated on "Why Do They Call a Private a Private?", a song introduced on one of their shows by Ethel Merman. Hayes later joined the all-service cast of *Moss Hart's* Air Force play *Winged Victory* (1943). The following year he appeared in the film version as well.

Hayes left the service in 1945 with a Bronze Star for having entertained more than a million troops in the South Pacific. His first post-war film was *Universal's The Senator Was Indiscreet* (1947), the only film directed by the celebrated playwright George S. Kaufman. Although Hayes had made at least a dozen previous screen appearances, his name on the opening credits was, curiously, preceded by "And Introducing".

After establishing themselves as a top night-club team, Hayes and Mary Healy appeared together in such television series as *The Chevrolet Show* (1949), *The Stork Club* (1950), *Star of the Family* (1951)

52) and the sitcom *Peter Loves Mary* (1960-61). For the big screen, they co-starred in *The Five Thousand Fingers of Dr T* (1953), the Dr Seuss musical about a young boy (Tommy Rettig) who rescues his hypnotised mother (Mary Healy) from his wicked piano teacher (Hans Conried), with the help of Mr Zabladowski, a friendly plumber (Hayes). A disaster on its first release, this surrealistic classic was successfully revived 20 years later and now enjoys cult status.

In 1952, while appearing with Mary Healy at the London Palladium, Hayes was asked the secret of a successful marriage. He replied, "All you have to do is get your wife in the act – and keep her there."

Dick Vosburgh

Joseph Conrad Lind (Peter Lind Hayes), actor, composer and writer: born San Francisco 25 June 1915; married 1940 Mary Healy (one son, one daughter); died Las Vegas 22 April 1998.

## D. W. J. Osmond

D. W. J. OSMOND was an innovative industrial chemist working with ICI for over 30 years.

He was born in 1925, the only son of a traindriver. He took a wartime science degree at Reading University, graduating in 1945; and began post-graduate studies there, funded by ICI, with Professor E.A. Guggenheim. Osmond was a dedicated researcher, always concerned to see a practical application of his work – a difference with Guggenheim which led him to discontinue his post-graduate project at Reading before he had obtained his doctorate.

The same independence of mind led him twice to decline promotion within ICI which would have taken him further from personal "hands-on" experimentation and observation.

His example, and that of others like him, led ICI to introduce in the Sixties a "scientific ladder" to recognise and reward scientific contribution comparably with that of senior management. Osmond was among the initial appointments and advanced to its highest level, retiring in 1979 as Senior Research Associate. His pioneering work at ICI on non-aqueous polymer dispersions arose from lateral thinking on how to produce more durable car paints with less air-polluting solvent. Little did he realise at its outset the breadth of industrial applications to which it would lead or its future academic significance.

It is a fascinating scientific detective story how, contrary to then accepted theory, his early experiments led adventitiously

to stable dispersions of the polymer poly-methyl methacrylate in petroleum fractions. Its elucidation then led to the synthesis of discrete specific stabilisers for individual polymers in different carrying liquids. The hazy understanding of the mechanism described as "steric stabilisation" (the means by which the polymer is held stably in the liquid) subsequently led him into the previously unexplored theoretical field of its energetics (thermodynamics). The early practical applications, for example in paint finishes for cars, led to ICI Paints' receiving in 1969 the rarer of the Queen's Awards for Industry, that for technical innovation. It later led to better alternatives to ceramics for sanitary ware and additives for reducing the flammability of aircraft fuels.

In 1974, Osmond and R.H. Rettewill, of Bristol University, were simultaneously awarded the Industrial Medal of the Chemical Society for their work in this field. A quarter of a century's work by Osmond and

industrial and academic colleagues is published in numerous patents, scientific papers and the 1975 book *Dispersion Polymerisation in Organic Media*.

All who encountered "Ozzie" professionally in industrial and academic science or socially and in his personal interests, recognised an extraordinary wide-ranging, powerfully analytical and creative mind of insatiable curiosity. It was combined with a similarly outstanding generosity of spirit. When he had applied himself with his customary intensity to almost any matter, there was little further for others to add. His co-workers, meanwhile, visibly grew under his encouragement.

The same fertile mind was applied to many of his fields of personal interest, most significantly to music and its performance and reproduction. He addressed himself to reducing the interaction of pitch and volume in recorders, and to improving the performance of plectra for harpsichords, and of high-fidelity "quad" speakers. In the mid-Seventies, he became a consultant to the Museum of Musical Instruments in Brussels on the better preservation of the many historical instruments in its outstanding collection.

It is a tribute to Osmond's intellectual acumen and will-power that he achieved so much while battling against the earlier stages of the distressing and debilitating Parkinson's disease. It cut short his scientific work, but he and his devoted wife, Peggy, maintained a long and brave struggle against it. Characteristically he assisted

Peter Bean, diplomat, died 30 April, aged 43. Deputy Head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office News Department.

Milburn Henke, soldier and restaurateur, died Hutchinson, Minnesota, aged 79. The first GI to set foot on the British Isles during the Second World War, on 26 January 1942 in Belfast. Ramzan el-Prince (Ramadan Mohammed Shakir), pop singer, died near Aswan, Egypt 26 April, aged 42. Songs include "We Shoulders the Burden Without Our Mothers".

George Fraser, journalist, died Aberdeen 24 April, aged 102. Britain's oldest working journalist; contributed a column to the *Press and Journal* until earlier this year.

Hassan Tahboub, died Amman, Jordan 27 April, aged 75. Palestinian minister of religious affairs.

Ken Gwilym, died aged 83. President of the Welsh Rugby Union 1984-85.

Desmond Wilfrid John Osmond, industrial chemist; born Salisbury, Wiltshire 27 June 1925; married 1946 Peggy Mulligan; died Exeter, Devon 13 April 1998.

John Long and Fred Waite

his medical advisers in diagnosis and treatment of his gradually deteriorating physical condition.

It is a tribute to Osmond's intellectual acumen and will-power that he achieved so much while battling against the earlier stages of the distressing and debilitating Parkinson's disease. It cut short his scientific work, but he and his devoted wife, Peggy, maintained a long and brave struggle against it. Characteristically he assisted

the baying against child killers and paedophiles reveals our urge to locate sin always outside ourselves. But even Sun journalists need to look elsewhere, argues Andrew Brown

THE DIFFICULT thing about original sin, when you come to think of it, is deciding where it stops and starts. It is not hard to discover that cruelty and misery are fundamental features of the way the world is, and of how we are. If the 20th century had one lesson, it was that this cruelty and misery is iradicable. We can perhaps make terms with it but we cannot hope to eradicate it; and all the various Utopian attempts to do so look gaudily in the muddy light of Pol Pot's funeral pyre.

However, the Utopian impulse is not long to be suppressed. Now that left-wing systems are out of fashion, there is a countervailing Utopianism which suggests that, if only we could take account of individual wickedness, then we

could design a system in which it would in any case not be amplified. Perhaps original sin is something that only people do, not societies. This is the sort of belief, it seems to me, that has led to the baying of Mary Bell.

It leads to a chain of reasoning something like this: she as an individual did something evil. This was something for which she alone was ultimately responsible – in so far as a child can be responsible for anything. No doubt she had a terrible childhood, maltreated by a gaudy mother and even some of her prostitute mother's customers. But other children have had childhoods just as bad and not committed these dreadful crimes. So (the Sun might argue) any attempts to exculpate her by drawing attention to this are in themselves wicked.

Yet original sin must mean something more than this. It is not a doctrine that says wicked people are responsible for their own wickedness; the startling power and originality of the doctrine is that it says that everyone has the capacity for real evil. Nicholas Lash, the Cambridge theologian, says: "What is needed is the reasonable patient quiet recognition of just what messed-up monsters all of us are."

sinful. It was just unexceptional, too. part of what the theologian Rowan Williams calls "the way that acts and persons grind together to destroy and erode everything".

What gives it a peculiar horror is the disproportion of the consequence to the wrongness. This disproportion is the social dimension of original sin. It is part of the ineradicable wrongness of the world which the doctrine also means; what the Pope called "structures of sin". What is true and right about the Gita Sereny approach to evil is that even the most evil among us need to have these tendencies brought out by the course of our lives; and most of those who are evil have had childhoods so gaudy that it is possible, dimly to imagine how we might crack under such strain.

The trouble is that the notion of original sin sounds absurd because the Genesis story in which it first appears is unhistorical. There was no Adam. There was no Eve. There never was a garden. The wrongness in the world was not all brought here by human beings. But with all that said, there is still sin to explain; and at least the old doctrine was right to say that it will persist for as long as the world does.

## BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS: **Ward:** On 7 April 1998, in Ipswich, Suffolk, Alison (née Gledhill) and David, a daughter, Helena Molly Elizabeth. A sister for Richard, Simon and Andrew.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GENTLE BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Deaths, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, in Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette's Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AA. Tel: 0171-292 2022 (24-hour answering machine 0771-292 2011) or faxed to 0771-292 2000, and are charged at £6.50 (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming meetings, etc) are charged at £10 a line, (VAT extra). Please include a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0771-292 2006. The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: **RAF:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, the Queen's Life Guards at Horse Guards, 11.30am. F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Guard provided by the Scots Guards. **TC:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mount the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Guard provided by the Coldstream Guards.

BIRTHDAYS: **TODAY:** Dr Robert Anderson, Director, British Museum, 54; Sir William Glock, music lecturer and critic; Sir William Gray, former Lord Provost of Glasgow, 70; Lt-Gen Sir Alexander Harley, Deputy Chief of Staff, 57; Dr David Harrison, Master, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 68; Professor Ruth Lester, social economist, 49; Col Sir Michael McCollard, Lord Lieutenant of County Londonderry, 73; Miss Sheila McKechnie, Director, Children's Music Association, 50; Sir Christopher Mayhew, MP, former Minister of State for Transport, 61; Mr Randal Marquand, poet and author, 86; Mr Peter Oosterhuis, golfer, 49; Baroness Seconna, Vice-Chairman, Conservative Party, 66; Mr Peter Seeger, folk singer, 75; Dr Norman Stansfield, MP, former Minister of State for Transport, 67; Mr Norman Thelwell, illustrator and cartoonist, 75; Miss Sandi Toksvig, comedienne, 40; Mr Robert Walter Miller, 50; Mr Alan Wells, athlete, 46.

ANNIVERSARIES: **TODAY:** Births Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby, singer, 1904. Deaths Leonardo da Vinci, sculptor and scientist, 1519. On this day the Authorised Version of the Bible was published, 1611. Today is the Feast of St Athanasius, saintly heresiarch, St Athanasius the Great, 356. Mr Henry Cooper, boxer, 49; Mr Jimmy White, snooker player, 36; Mr Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, 65. **MORROW:** Births: Mr Golda Meir, Israeli prime minister, 1898. Deaths: Thomas Hood, poet, 1845. **TOmmORrow:** Births: Mrs Betty Comden, playwright and screenwriter, 79; Mrs Kathy Cook, actress, 38; Mr Henry Cooper, boxer, 64; Mr Geraint Davies MP, 38; Sir Graham Day, former chairman, Cadbury Schweppes and PowerGen, 63;

Faith & Reason

## Original sin and the hounding of Mary Bell

## Four-day winning streak puts Footsie back above 6,000

### MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

**EQUITIES** achieved a four-day winning streak with Footsie recapturing the 6,000 high ground.

This week's advance has reduced fears that the Stock Market had run out of steam and was set for a dull, subdued period of indecisiveness.

It was the first time for two weeks that Footsie topped 6,000 points. It started this week with a 141.5 fall as sudden worries of higher US interest rates took their toll.

But since bleak Monday, shares have moved ahead and yesterday's progress, an 82 gain to 6,010.3, meant the index achieved a near 150 net gain over the five trading days.

An in-form New York, some encouraging economic indicators and that old faithful, takeover excitement, provided the stimulus. Supporting shares were in form with the mid and small cap indices making headway.

Turnover, however, was

low, as beffited a Friday ahead of a Bank Holiday.

EMI, which prompted the bid excitement with its revelation of a bid approach, gave up little of its takeover-inspired gain, ending 7.5p off at 60p. Allied Domecq, the drinks group, which could be drawn into corporate action if Seagram, the Canadian group, does, as most suspect, merge with EMI's suitor, firmed 14p to 47.25p.

Picking the next bid target occupied much of the day's trading. Reckitt & Colman, the household goods group, for long suspected of being in Unilever's sights, jumped 52p to 1,257p; Ladbroke, seen as an American target, countered 11.25p to 340p and Safeway, known to have attracted Asda, put 11p to 367.5p.

Unilever, helped by results, did its acquisition ability no harm at all with a 31p gain to 668p; Asda, with Dresdner Kleinwort Benson positive, rose 4.5p to 204.75p.

Carpetright was unimpressed by more share buying by chairman Lord Harris of Peckham, the Tory Party benefactor. He acquired 290,000 shares at 330p and now has 16.16 per cent. The deal left the shares off 6p to 338p. They were 65p two years ago.

Cable & Wireless was another caught up in the speculation. The shares improved 25p to 710p. Orange, the mobile phone group, also had a speculative ring, up 18p to 47.25p.

Southern Electric, the only one of the electricity dozen privatised eight years ago to retain its independence, held at 550p as SG Securities drew attention to its "rarity value".

Insurers remained in demand. General Accident added 74p to 1,480p with its intended partner, Commercial Union, improving 51p to 1,170p. The insurance merger is still, some believe, threatened by European interest.

The shares of the two had a weak time before rallying this week. There is speculation the share retreat could have encouraged an overseas group to consider intervening.

Alliance & Leicester enjoyed a late run, jumping 54p to 890p as some decided it could be the first quoted

former building society to feel the heat of a takeover strike. Talk of share buybacks, even a special dividend, was also in the air.

Whitbread, ahead of figures next week, gained 37p to 1,070p. Merrill Lynch expects £358.2m, a £55.4m gain.

Cadbury Schweppes hardened 6p to 878p. Its first-quarter US soft drink sales came

in better than some predicted. Volume was up 1.5 per cent, despite a late Easter, with the shares were suspended at Dr Pepper brand leading the way.

Abbey National shaded 8p to 1,115p as SBC Warburg trimmed its profits estimates and lowered its target price to 1,220p. Halifax, with Schroders offering a 900p target, firmed 4p to 629p.

Streamline, the road maintenance group, advanced 27.5p to 297.5p as Jarvis moved in with a £184.5m agreed cash and share offer.

Jarvis up 21.5p to 685p, is already entrenched in rail maintenance. Its shares were 800p three years ago.

Carpetright was unimpressed by more share buying by chairman Lord Harris of Peckham, the Tory Party benefactor. He acquired 290,000 shares at 330p and now has 16.16 per cent. The deal left the shares off 6p to 338p. They were 65p two years ago.

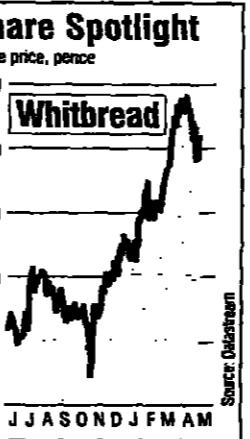
Hambros Insurance Services may not be around long enough to be split from Hambros, the merchant bank falling to a South African strike. The shares rose 16p to 124.5p after the company said it had received approaches. It is owned 52 per cent by Hambros.

### TAKING STOCK

**STOCKBROKER** Duracher, planning a move into market-making, jumped 57.5p to 275p, a peak, as the market continued on its involvement with Demon Internet, Britain's largest independent internet service provider. ScottishPower is paying £66m in cash for the internet business. Duracher's Demon stake is not thought to be large, around 1 per cent.

**ASPIEN**, the marketing and specialist printing group, firmed 2.5p to 112.5p. There was talk of takeover action. A US group, Quaeus, is known to be interested and has around 3 per cent of the capital. It became apparent in March that Quaeus was considering an offer. The Americans specialise in the information industry.

**CHARLTON**, the First Division club challenging for a place in the Premiership, raised £674,000, placing shares at 50p. Directors were among those taking up the shares, unchanged at 51.5p.



### Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (PE) ratio is the sharper measure divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including exceptional items.

Other details: Ex rights & Ex dividend; S - Suspending; P - Purdy Paid; NP - Not Paid; G - Gilt. Gilt Prices are Bloomberg Generics.

Source: Bloomberg

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(TUE p/c, London EC2A 4JY)

Seq volume: 674.3m trades 61,543

Gilt Index n/a

### Market Leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol	Val	Vol	Stock	Val	Stock	Val
Carters	73.7m	Albert Fisher	8.0m	Midland	8.5m	Regal & Sun All	6.3m
Unilever	20.3m	Clarus Property	9.0m	HDI Furniture	7.7m	BIG	6.25m
Old Cat	12.8m	Lloyds TSB Group	8.75m	Abbey Natl	7.65m	Sears	5.97m
Ent Group	8.9m	Read Reit	8.6m	Aggregates Inds	7.25m	Premier Oil	5.78m
Pingstone	8.7m	Shetland Reg	8.0m	Emerald Energy	5.64m		
<b>FTSE 100 Index: hour by hour</b>							
Open	5978.3	Hi 5997.7	Up 89.4	1600	5995.9	Up 67.6	
900	5940.0	Up 11.7	Up 26.0	5950.0	5950.0	Up 66.1	
1000	5964.4	Up 13.0	Up 59.3	Up 65.0	6003.3	Up 74.8	
<b>Oil Integrated</b>							
Open	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
520	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
530	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
540	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
550	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
560	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
570	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
580	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
590	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
600	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
610	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
620	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
630	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
640	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
650	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
660	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
670	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
680	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
690	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
700	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
710	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
720	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
730	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
740	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
750	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
760	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
770	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
780	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
790	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
800	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
810	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
820	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
830	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
840	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
850	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
860	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
870	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2
880	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2	22.0	810.0	Up 43.0	Up 5.2</

## £33m for Internet pioneer as ScottishPower buys Demon

By Michael Harrison

A FORMER accountant who set up Britain's biggest independent Internet service provider with £20,000 capital six years ago yesterday made £33m by selling the business to ScottishPower.

Scottish Telecom, the telecoms arm of ScottishPower, is paying £6m to acquire Demon Internet from Cliff Stanford, its founder and former managing director. Mr Stanford, who owned half the business, will continue to act as a consultant to Demon,

although he plans to launch a new business venture next week.

Some 250 of Demon's 570 employees will also make windfalls averaging about £10,000 each from share options in the business.

From a standing start in 1992 Demon has become the best-known of the Internet service providers and the biggest "dial-up" company in Europe with 180,000 subscribers out of the estimated 300,000 who connect to the web through Internet service providers. It pioneered low-cost, flat-rate connection to the Internet in

Britain and the Netherlands. About 40 per cent of its users are business customers and Demon generates 6 million minutes of telephone usage a day.

In the year to 30 April 1997 it made a bottom line loss of £2.8m on sales of £18m after spending £4.6m on a transatlantic link to the United States.

Roy Bliss, managing director of Demon, said the company was operating more or less profitably now and maintained it could have continued on its own. But he said the takeover by ScottishPower would secure its future in a market which by some

estimates is growing at 10 per cent a month and attracting the likes of British Telecom, which has launched its own Internet service provider.

The UK Internet access market is increasingly expected to be dominated by large players with bigger subscriber bases, deeper pockets and the resources to introduce additional services.

Scottish Telecom is already a significant player in the telecoms market north of the border and on-line information is a growing part of its business. Through its subsidiary, The Information Service, it claims

to account for 22 per cent of the premium rate call traffic in the UK.

It also has a joint venture with the publisher DC Thomson called Scotland Online, the leading Scottish Internet service, and took over business and financial information service provider Presid On Line two years ago.

The Demon deal takes ScottishPower's investment in Scottish Telecom to £150m since its launch in 1994, of which £90m has been spent on acquisitions. It now has a staff of 1,500 and recently unveiled plans to develop a fibre optic network

throughout the Highlands and Islands.

Mr Stanford, 44, who grew up in Southend-on-Sea and became an articled clerk in a firm of accountants straight after leaving school, ran his own software business before latching on to the potential of the Internet. He now lives in Belgium and said that his only hobby for the last six years had been "the Internet, the Internet and the Internet".

The other shareholders in Demon are the venture capital group APAX Partners and Giles Todd, who helped found the business with Mr Stanford.

£4.7bn  
set as  
minimum  
price  
for EMI

By Andrew Yates

SHAREHOLDERS in EMI are unlikely to relinquish control of the music giant for less than 650p a share, which would value the group at least £4.7bn, it emerged yesterday.

EMI's board is also likely to reject any bid significantly below that price according to sources close to the company.

Seagram is believed to have expressed an interest in EMI and has held informal talks about an offer, according to industry sources. Observers believe that an initial price of 580p has been mooted. But it appears that any bidder would have to pay significantly more than that to be successful.

One of EMI's large institutional shareholders said yesterday: "The idea of a 580p bid is a non-starter. EMI may have had its management problems and handled them badly but it is still a rare catch and should be priced as such."

Another fund manager said: "We would want at least 650p a share to make an offer worthwhile."

Anthony de Larrinaga, media analyst at Panmure Gordon, said: "580p looks too low, despite the pain we have all suffered."

"After all, EMI is the largest music publisher in the world - and there is growing demand for music rights."

EMI's share slipped 7.5p to 600.5p yesterday as some analysts expressed doubts that a firm offer for the company would emerge.

## Industry gloom rules out rate rise

By Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

FRESH evidence yesterday of a sharp downturn in manufacturing all but ruled out the prospect of a rise in interest rates next week. In the second gloomy survey of industry this week, the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply said manufacturing activity declined in April for the first time in almost two years.

This weak result, combined with a burst of optimism about the German mark as ministers gathered for the euro decision weekend in Brussels, took the pound to its lowest level for more than two months. It ended more than 3 pence lower

faster rate in April than the previous month, while the growth of output tailed off sharply. Just 13 per cent of firms said their export orders had risen last month.

The output index dropped from 56.8 to 50.2, with consumer goods the only sector to report rising output. Employment also fell for the second month running.

The survey confirmed evidence from a Confederation of British Industry survey earlier this week that the strong pound and falling exports are hammering manufacturing. "The portents for the future are not good," said Peter Thomson, the CIPS director general.

Separate statistics yesterday showed that March's increase in consumer credit was the highest since the monthly figures began, and that new mortgage commitments had risen sharply, did not sway analysts' verdict about the outcome of next week's meeting of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee.

Consumer credit leapt by £1.4bn in March, taking the annual rate of increase up from 15.8 per cent to 16.6 per cent.

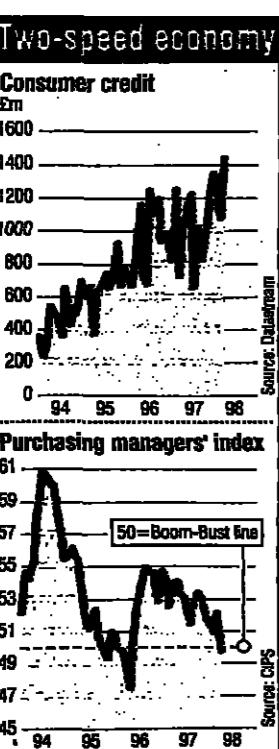
As retail sales rose less than expected during the month, analysts speculated that the credit jump reflected either non-retail spending such as holidays and cars or further take-up of cheap credit deals on the high street.

Total new mortgage lending dipped slightly to £1.8bn in March, the Bank of England reported, its growth rate edging down to 5.7 per cent. However, the number of new mortgage commitments increased.

"The fact that consumers are still happy to borrow is consistent with the message from the latest consumer confidence numbers, which are still reasonably strong," said Jonathan Loynes, an economist at HSBC Markets.

However, the latest figures have removed most analysts' concerns about the risk of a further rise in the cost of borrowing, even though some parts of the economy obviously remain much stronger than the embattled manufacturing sector.

The retreat this week of earlier fears that the Federal Reserve would raise US interest rates has also helped shift sentiment in the UK.



at DM2.96, while sterling's index against a range of currencies fell a full point to 105.3. The May Day holiday on the Continent meant the currency markets were quiet.

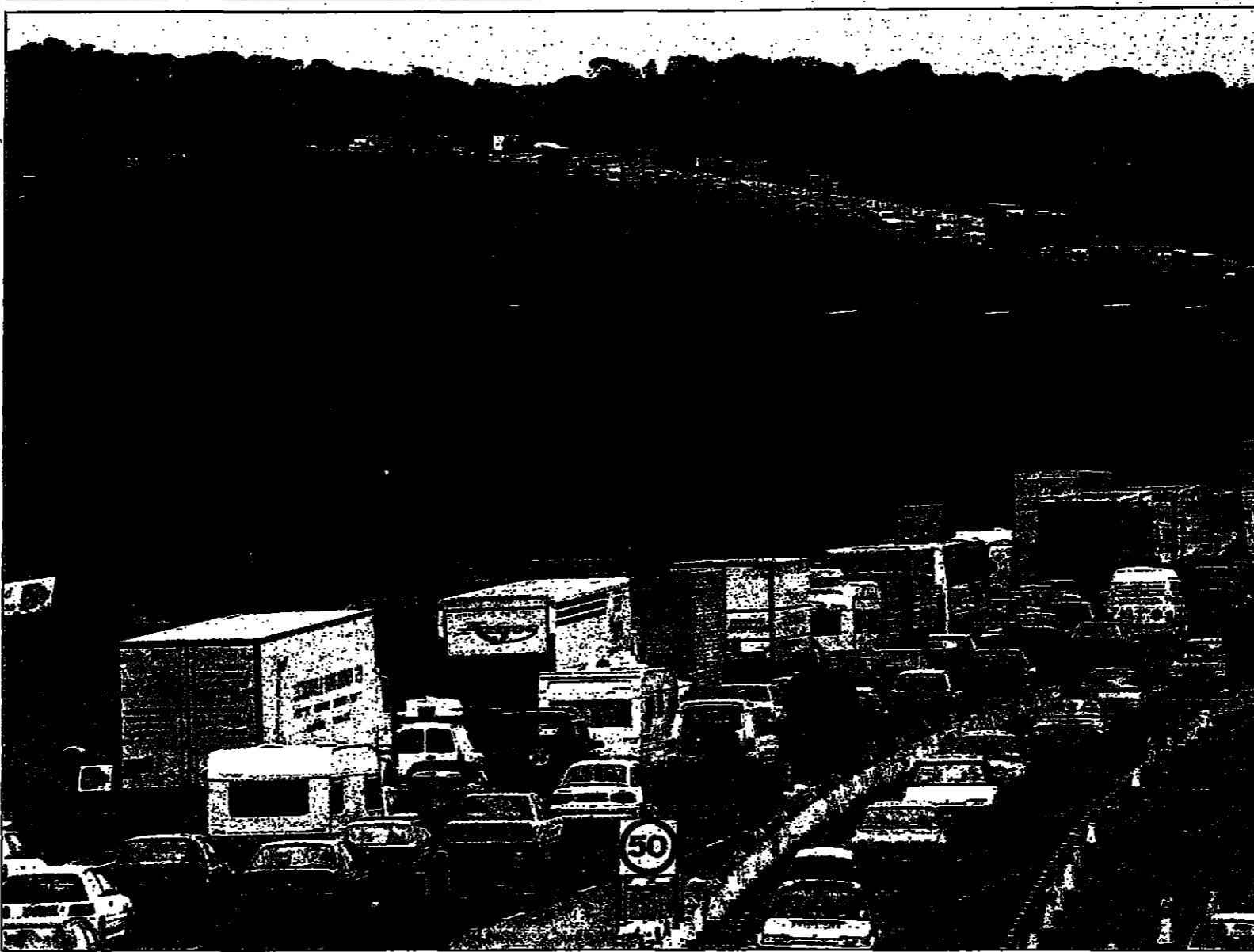
The FTSE-100 index climbed back above 6,000. It ended 82 points higher at 6,010.3.

The CIPS Purchasing Managers' Index declined below the 50 "boom-bust" line of 50 to 49.5, compared with 52.0 in March. The main reason for the weaker result was a drop in new orders and output.

Export orders fell at an even

rate of 1.5 per cent, while imports rose 1.2 per cent.

The retreat this week of earlier fears that the Federal Reserve would raise US interest rates has also helped shift sentiment in the UK.



Photograph: John Lawrence

## Streamline sale nets managers £26m

By Michael Harrison

A GROUP of managers and employees at Streamline, the road cones and highway maintenance company, were £26m richer yesterday after the business was taken over in a £184m deal by the construction and rail group Jarvis.

Streamline, a management buy-out from Shell in 1993 which subsequently floated on the stock market in 1996, is 14 per cent owned by Terry Simpson, its chief executive, and 50 other managers and senior employees.

The acquisition will turn Jarvis into a £1bn company with interests spanning rail, construction, road services and specialist building materials.

Streamline has four main businesses - road maintenance, road marking, roadside signs and special road services such as bus and cycle lanes and sleeping policemen.

The company has contracts to maintain road networks in eight shire counties and has also won three road maintenance contracts let by the Highways Agency. The maintenance agreements cover everything from repairing potholes to accident clearance and gritting and include looking after some of the busiest roads in London from the North Circular Road and Marylebone Road to the stretches of the A1 and M1 be-

tween the capital and the M25.

Mr Simpson, who will join the board of Jarvis, said that although road marking might seem like a simple business it involved a lot of technology. "There is more to a white line than meets the eye," he added.

Jarvis is paying for Streamline with cash and shares and has acceptances from shareholders holding a third of the equity which are binding even if a higher rival offer is made.

Jarvis, led by Paris Moayedi, has grown from a small construction group into one of the country's biggest transport maintenance companies. It snapped up five of the 13 British Rail maintenance and track renewal companies sold off at privatisation. Mr Moayedi said the Streamline deal would take it into Europe and the Far East and opened up the possibility of tendering for toll road management contracts.

Another fund manager said:

"We would want at least 650p a share to make an offer worthwhile."

Anthony de Larrinaga, media analyst at Panmure Gordon, said: "580p looks too low, despite the pain we have all suffered."

"After all, EMI is the largest music publisher in the world - and there is growing demand for music rights."

EMI's share slipped 7.5p to 600.5p yesterday as some analysts expressed doubts that a firm offer for the company would emerge.

## £3.5m pledge to sick Flextech chief

By Paul McCann  
Media Editor

ROGER LUARD, who took Flextech from an obscure oil services company to a £800m pay-television giant, has been offered what is probably Britain's biggest ever sick-pay cheque.

Mr Luard, 49, Flextech's chief executive, has been fighting an inflammatory eye condition since January that threatens to impair his visual field. Doctors have told him he needs to leave work for more advanced treatment. The company's board announced yesterday that it had made him an offer of £3.5m if he cannot return to work by 31 December.

They will report to Adam Singer, Flextech's executive chairman since last year.

Mr Singer said: "Roger is receiving treatment for his eye condition and it is important that he has proper time to re-

coverate. The company and shareholders wish Roger a speedy recovery and a quick return to work."

Flextech provides 16 pay-television channels to 25 million viewers in the UK and Europe and is the biggest supplier of pay-television programmes in the UK. Its channels include the archive service Bravo, the women's lifestyle channel Living and the teenage channel Trouble.

Mr Luard guided Flextech to its present size with the backing of Flextech's major shareholder TeleCommunications International, the international arm of John Malone's TCI group, the biggest cable TV company in the world.

Luard: Pay-off if he cannot return by 31 December

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**JEREMY WARNER**  
ON WHY  
EVERYONE IS UP  
IN ARMS OVER  
THE STOCK  
EXCHANGE, AND  
WHY ONE  
REGULATOR GETS  
MORE PRAISE  
THAN ANOTHER

IT HAS not been a good week for Gavin Casey, chief executive of the London Stock Exchange. First came a survey of leading fund managers which found many to be damning in their criticism of the exchange's new "order-driven" trading system. Then Tradepoint, a competitor to the exchange, said its research showed considerable dissatisfaction among institutional investors with the new set-up.

But the *coup de grace* came from Philip Augur, group managing director of Schroders Securities. "The Stock Exchange should consider very carefully whether the 30 per cent market share for SETS (the new order-driven system) and the apparent worsening of spreads for institutional investors is consistent with its duties and will be sufficient to prevent an Office of Fair Trading inquiry", he said in one of the most damning letters about the exchange I have ever seen *aired publicly in the City*.

How is it that the exchange, whose purpose is to provide a public service system for the trading of securities, has come to attract such criticism, some of the fiercest since it was forced to abandon fixed commissions and dual capacity in the mid 1980s?

Actually, there is nothing wrong with the new system as such. Technically it works just fine, and despite early concern that it badly disadvantaged small retail investors, it is now bedding down in a way

which is probably mildly beneficial to them. Ironically, the problems are occurring with big institutional investors. Since it was pressure from them, and the threat that they would move their business to the order-driven systems of the Continental bourses, which caused the exchange to introduce the new system in the first place, this is something of a turn up for the books.

The Stock Exchange claims that retail trades are typically being done under the new system on a spread (the difference between the offer and bid price) which is 15 per cent better than the old, quote-driven way of trading. But according to Mr Augur's letter, that is not the case for institutional investors, who on his calculations have seen the spread roughly double in size since the new system came into being.

Partly as a result of this, the order book has failed to gain the level of trade and liquidity required to make it attractive to those dealing in larger blocks of shares. Since the order book is not allowing institutions to deal in the quantities they require, they are forced to fall back on the old quote-driven system, or to deal off-market entirely. The order book is for many becoming little more than a sounding board for market makers and others to find out who's buying and selling. The main business is then done away from the book.

So what's all the fuss about? If institu-

tions don't like the new system, there's always the old one to fall back on, isn't there? Unfortunately the old system, which obliged market-makers to deal at published prices, is no longer being enforced, officially because the exchange wants to encourage use of SETS. Market-makers can pick and choose who they deal with, and because prices are no longer transparent, they can deal at whatever level the market will take. Market-making is suddenly a highly profitable business. Meanwhile, everyone else is being ripped off.

In essence, the Stock Exchange has become a hostage to three or four powerful market-makers. It is their interests, rather than those of the investment community as a whole, which the exchange now serves. The situation is a disgrace and demands government action. The Office of Fair Trading is already investigating the City's underwriting cartel, but the sums involved here are an irrelevance set alongside the huge amounts being traded through the market each day. Come on Mr Bridgeman. Do something about it, because the Stock Exchange certainly doesn't look as if it is going to move on its own.

THE MOST striking thing about John Battle's advertisement yesterday for the first energy regulator, taking in both gas

and electricity regulation, was not the fact of the announcement at all. Rather it was in what the minister for science, energy and industry had to say about the two present incumbents as head of gas and electricity regulation.

First, Professor Stephen Littlechild, director general of electricity supply, Mr Battle positively overflows with praise for the bearded Prof. "I would like to put on record my strong appreciation of his contribution made over many years" ...

blab-blah, blah-blah. Can Mr Battle really be referring to the same man? Stephen Littlechild is best remembered in the City and elsewhere as the regulator who so profoundly misjudged his first review of prices in the electricity industry that within months he was forced to re-review the review, which had been generous in the extreme to the companies and their shareholders. Furthermore, he chose to announce this slap bang in the middle of the Government's sale of shares in PowerGen and National Power, thus causing the City to think, albeit briefly, it had been sold a pup. Indeed, it is him Mr Battle has in mind.

To be fair, Professor Littlechild is not entirely without his good points. He is the man who originally invented the formula on which all price regulation of utilities seems to be based in the UK. The concept has since been much used elsewhere in the world.

Furthermore it has been instrumental in yielding massive price reductions across the utilities, enormously improving the efficiency of these industries and thus the competitiveness of the UK economy. So we owe him a debt as a thinker. It was in the practice that he may have left something to be desired. The judgement of history is a harsh one; fortunately for Prof Littlechild, Mr Battle's is not.

With Clare Spottiswoode, director general of gas supply, it is rather the other way round. She's the one who seems to be a senior civil servant at the Department of Energy, is invariably described as the laughing regulator, and British Gas liked to depict as clean round the bend. Her achievement is that she took on British Gas as well. Both halves of the once demerged group - distribution and sales - seem to be thriving on their own.

This is what Mr Battle has to say about her: "I should also like to acknowledge the work of Clare Spottiswoode, whose five-year contract as director general of gas supply comes to an end on 31 October." There's a bit more than this, but not much. Presumably there's something personal here, for of the two regulators, Ms Spottiswoode seems to have the better record. Perhaps Mr Battle would care to tell us about it.

## Single watchdog for energy prices

By Michael Harrison

THE GAS regulator Clare Spottiswoode and her opposite number in electricity, Professor Stephen Littlechild, are to be replaced by a single energy regulator, the Government confirmed yesterday.

The search for a candidate to take on the £120,000-a-year post has already begun with the appointment of headhunters. An appointment is hoped to be made before the autumn.

The widely anticipated move follows the decision outlined in last month's utility green paper to merge Offer and Ofgas into one body following the liberalisation of the gas and electricity markets.

Ms Spottiswoode's £96,000-a-year contract ends on 31 October and she had already made it plain to friends and colleagues that she did not intend to stay on either at Ofgas or as head of the combined regulator.

Professor Littlechild's £109,000-a-year contract does not expire until August. He has agreed to stay on, probably until the end of the year, to ensure an orderly transition and to oversee the opening up of domestic competition in electricity.

Advertisements for the new energy regulator's job call for someone with an understand-

ing of how government and regulation operate and who is "an excellent communicator and of unquestioned integrity".

A possible candidate is Anna Walker, former deputy director-general of the telecoms regulator Ofcom, now conducting the Government's energy review.

Whitehall officials stressed yesterday that Professor Littlechild's decision to leave was his own and that ministers would have liked him to stay on. Colleagues say that he may move into consultancy, perhaps for one of the big integrated US power utilities.

The person appointed will initially take over as head of Ofgas and then move into the job of combined regulator. The Government has left open the possibility of replacing the post of individual regulator with a

board or commission in which case the job will be to chair the new body.

Ms Spottiswoode's departure became inevitable after she was overruled by the Energy Minister John Battle in a dispute over the marketing of gas and electricity. She had wanted to prevent electricity companies from selling gas to customers until their own markets were open to competition.

Announcing the changes yesterday Mr Battle was effusive in his thanks to Professor Littlechild, recording his "strong appreciation" of his contribution and the "key role" he played in improving service and lowering prices.

His comments about Ms Spottiswoode were more perfunctory.

Jeremy Warner, this page

**Degrees of praise: Spottiswoode and Littlechild**



BAT says the collapse of the US proposals would make smoking easier for teenagers

## BAT warns of US black market

By Andrew Verity

BAT Industries, the British cigarette giant, yesterday claimed the US would develop a black market in tobacco for teenagers because of the collapse of a \$367.5bn (£220m) legal settlement with the industry.

Lord Cairns, chairman of BAT, said "politics go in the way of common sense" when the deal collapsed last month.

"The proposals suggested by the Senate combine huge taxes with a mammoth bureaucracy and would result in an inevitable black market which, perversely, would make cigarettes more accessible to teenagers," he said.

BAT has warned of bank-

ruptcy for the whole US tobacco industry if the Senate goes ahead with plans for a tougher, legislated settlement. If the industry complies with the proposals, the cost is expected to exceed \$600bn.

The first settlement, agreed in June 1997, gave tobacco companies exemption from future class actions for damages caused by cigarettes. The Senate's new proposals would remove that protection.

BAT shares rose after it reported better-than-expected first quarter profits of £573m, a two per cent fall. Profits had been expected to fall to £560m in comparison with last year, when BAT sold First Federal, a US savings and loan association.

Sales of BAT's US products - Kool, GPC, Misty and Capri - slumped by 10 per cent to 16 billion cigarettes after rivals launched new brands.

Results were bolstered by the group's financial services wing, British American Financial Services (BAFS), which saw profits leap by 16 per cent to £298m. BAES is set to merge with Zurich Financial Services on June 12. Zurich will take a 57 per cent stake.

Eagle Star, an insurance subsidiary of BAES, said claims from the April floods would be lower than feared. If other insurers have a similar exposure, the total cost of the floods will be £300m. Damage was at first expected to come to £500m.

## Further blow for Newcastle as fourth director leaves club

By Andrew Yates

NEWCASTLE, the troubled Premier League club rocked by scandal over comments from two senior executives, has lost its fourth director since it came to the stock market a year ago.

The resignation of Jo Dixon, Newcastle's finance director, is another blow to the group's credibility in the City, according to analysts.

The announcement follows the departure of Freddy Shepherd and Douglas Hall, who left the club in disgrace after making damaging remarks about

team members and fans. Newcastle also lost Mark Corbridge, joint chief executive, last July when he resigned after just seven months with the club.

Ms Dixon, 38, joined Newcastle from National Westminster Bank three years ago and received a £100,000 bonus from Cameron Hall, the majority shareholders in the club, when it floated.

Both Ms Dixon and Newcastle denied her departure had anything to do with the problems that have beset the club. "I have had a great time. But this is my third anniversary here and I wanted to move on," she said.

**COMPANY RESULTS**

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Arts (F)	28,826m (28,836m)	3,371m (3,454m)	3.0p (4.3p)	1.2p (1.2p)
Amers (F)	17,408m (15,838m)	-1.810m (-1.515m)	2.1p (2.45p)	n/a
AVC Industries (F)	6,057m (5,677m)	573m (565m)	10.7p (11.1p)	-1
Baillie Gifford (F)	21,979m (19,659m)	0.625m (-1.251m)	1.4p (-5.7p)	1.15p (1.5p)
BIG International (F)	2,459m (3,251m)	-1.78m (0.411m)	-2.2p (1.5p)	-1
SWP Group (F)	8,654m (7,184m)	-1.50m (0.158m)	-0.77p (0.1p)	n/a
Orbital (F)	7,072m (7,179m)	754m (492m)	5.67p (3.94p)	-1

(F) - Final (F) - Interim (D) - Quarterly EPS is pre-exceptional

## Capital buys alternative rock station

By Clifford German

CAPITAL RADIO, the music-based entertainment group whose bid to win control of Richard Branson's Virgin Radio was blocked earlier this year, has agreed to buy 90.1 per cent of Xfm, the London-based alternative rock station, for £14.5m.

The deal is subject to approval by the regulatory authorities. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission rejected Capital's £87m bid for Virgin Radio on competition grounds after deliberating for six

months, just after a consortium led by the Chris Evans, the DJ, had snatched control of Virgin with a slightly lower bid of £55m.

David Mansfield, Capital Radio's chief executive, said the bid for Xfm would not be referred. Acquiring Xfm would give Capital Radio the two FM stations and one AM station in the London area which it is allowed by the Broadcasting Act 1996. Unlike the acquisition of Virgin Radio it would not materially increase the group's share of the listening audience in London or the share of advertising revenue.

"We are not collecting nuggets of gold here, we are acquiring a seam of gold but we have to dig to find it," a spokesman said.

Chris Parry, Xfm's managing

director and co-founder, will continue as a director and retain the outstanding 9.9 per cent stake in the company.

After taking into account start-up costs, Xfm lost £1.7m in the year to the end of December and the deal is unlikely to have a positive impact on Capital Radio's profits this year.

The shares rose 30.5p to £60.5p.

Capital FM is already the market leader in London radio, with 15.5 per cent of the capital's audience. Capital Gold has a further 5.2 per cent. The group controls around 60 per cent of the commercial advertising revenue.

There are no suggestions that Mr Scargill or anyone else has been involved in any impropriety, but that certain procedures had not been followed.

Mr Scargill and a fellow trustee Frank Cave lodged their appeal this week, claiming in their writ: "There has been no misconduct or mismanagement by the plaintiffs in the administration of either charity."

The writ continues: "It has not been shown that the suspension of the First Plaintiff [Mr Scargill] and subsequent removal of both plaintiffs is or was necessary or desirable for the purpose of protecting the property of either charity."

The writ says that if any misconduct or mismanagement in the running of either charity has taken place, it has not been shown that this has resulted from "any act or omission on the part of the plaintiffs."

The Charity Commission took its action last year against Mr Scargill over the allegedly inappropriate transfer of £800,000 to the homes fund from the welfare fund.

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which are owned by the company. The offices are at Yalding House, 152/156 Great Portland Street and are owned by Borodin Properties, a company in receivership.

In practical terms the receivers Coopers & Lybrand control Borodin, on behalf of the company's creditors.

The BBC originally had a tenancy agreement with Borodin for three years, dating from 6 August 1995. The broadcaster is applying for a new five-year tenancy starting from 12 December 1998, at a rent of £300,000 a year.

Coopers & Lybrand did not comment.

TWO councils in Kent are heading for a court battle over a proposed shopping development.

Shepway District Council has been granted leave to seek a judicial review of Ashford Council's treatment of a major development site at Ashford.

Shepway Council claims that outline

## WHO'S SUING WHO

JOHN WILLCOCK



# A country cure for city children

**Paul Vallely's  
BRITAIN**



**Sheffield:**  
Should the lottery benefit pampered pigs or battered women? A farm in the Peak District that helps deprived and handicapped children provides an interesting case

**I**t was the five-star hotel for pigs which was the final straw. Britain's only national 24-hour helpline for battered women announced this week that it may have to close after being refused a National Lottery grant. To make matters worse, the sum it needed was the same as the Lottery awarded to a pig farm to build luxury pens for 24 porkers, with underfloor heating and snout-operated showers. Supporters of the crisis line, including Ruby Wax, Helena Kennedy QC and the former hostage John McCarthy, protested at a world in which battered women were less important than pampered pigs.

If only life were so simple. There can be little doubt as to the value of the helpline, run by the domestic-violence charity Refuge, which is staffed 365 days a year to refer threatened women to 200 refuges throughout the country. It is run from a light modern office not far from the Embankment, in London, its walls covered with maps showing the nation's refuges and their current bed availability. There, one of its 95 volunteer telephone counsellors, a woman named Vivian, who is by day a secretary with a firm of kitchen installers, gave an account of the grim world she encounters down the line.

"Something like a third of the calls are from a payphone after a woman has walked out with the children and just the clothes they stand in, with nothing more than 20p in her pocket and nowhere to stay for

the night," she said. "Some of the accounts make you want to weep – like the woman who was woken up at midnight and punched in the nose because she hadn't cleaned out the aquarium, or the man who lined his children up on the sofa to watch him beat up their mother."

How could a pig unit compete with that, I wondered as I drove up to Whirlow Hall Farm, which lies at the foot of the Peak District; its 130 acres produce sheep, cattle, barley, soft fruit, potatoes, carrots and other veg. But it is also just four miles from Sheffield city centre and it is run by a charity whose aim is to give disabled and disadvantaged children a taste of country life.

As I arrived, six children with severe physical handicaps, from Oakes Park School in the city, were emerging from The Barn, in whose 12 purpose-built rooms they had stayed overnight with four teachers. "We got stuck yesterday on that steep hill on the bikes," one youngster rushed out and blurted with wild enthusiasm. He pointed to the hill, which was the gentlest of inclines, albeit a little slippery with mud. "Just walking on different surfaces is an adventure for these children," explained one of the teachers, Pauline Galbraith, as she rallied the group for an expedition of pond-dipping. "Children who come to stay here talk about it for years to come."

In the field nearby, one of the adults with severe learning disabilities employed by the farm was unwinding a bale of wire. Over at the



greenhouses, students from Loxley Centre – slow learners in their twenties for whom the commercial world would have no use – were painting the glass to stop the plants inside overheating in the unseasonably hot spring sunshine. In the vegetable garden half a dozen teenagers from Talbot Special School were engaged in activities from meticulous weeding to aimless hoe-waving.

Watching them, a youth called William sat in a wheelchair and gurgled. "He's happy. That's singing," explained his teacher, Kerry Longden. "When he's angry – like this morning – he bites you. But he's

much better now. His mother says he's a different person when he's had a day at the farm. Pupils who have no success in the schoolroom find a sense of achievement here. Some are great weavers, others are adept at picking soft fruit; others push wheelbarrows; others feed the animals. There's something which gives each of them a confidence which carries over into their general attitude back at school." Which is why everyone at the farm was taken aback by the vehemence of the reaction to their lottery grant.

Whirlow Hall has, until now, been used only to receiving plaudits from the local press and from busi-

nesses such as BT and Sainsbury's, which sponsor it – not to mention the praise of dozens of volunteers who give their time to the farm.

"We just weren't expecting the criticism," said local businessman Alan Aikin, who chairs the Farm Trust. "We applied for money from a different lottery category to the women's refuge. So the comparison is unfair." Nor are they asking for funding for running costs, as the Refuge is, but only for a start-up grant.

"Once we get going, the profits from pig sales will be enough to cover our costs."

That highlights the problem

Five-star farm: Whirlow Hall, outside Sheffield, which received a grant to build luxury pens for pigs, much to the disgust of the domestic-violence charity Refuge

Photographs: Guzelian



unaltered year-on-year, the lottery is doomed by its constant need for publicity to emphasise novelty rather than continuity. "How can you run a social service on this hand-to-mouth basis?" asks Ms Horley.

Back at the farm, two eight-year-olds were discussing whether a pig unit was needed. The boys were from Porter Croft Junior, where most children, said their teacher, Ann Booth, had never spent a night away from home before. "They are from a very poor working-class inner-city area. Many are from single-parent families. And for many English is a second language." The majority had never been on holiday and many had never been to the countryside.

There is clearly a policy issue here. The National Lottery Charities Board is now the biggest grant-maker in Europe. It already courts controversy, because the process by which charities apply for cash is so complicated that expert consultants can charge vast fees to help complete the application form. Refuge spent £7,000 processing its application. To add to the rows, the board does not disclose the training or qualifications of its assessors. And it then rejects four out of five applications without explanation. It is "a kangaroo court with no right of appeal" according to Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of the schizophrenia charity SANE, which has been rejected by the lottery three times now.

But the Refuge row reveals a more deep-seated problem. "They should take some responsibility for ensuring that what they start continues," said Ms Horley. "Not unlike a government, which is stuck with the fact that its spending on public services must continue 90 per cent

News of the disabled and disadvantaged children at the pig unit placated Ms Horley only momentarily.

"Perhaps there is an argument for that award," she acknowledged, "but what about the £180,000 the lottery has given to a bereaved pet owners' helpline?"

"Yes, I agreed, that sounds terrible. But, perhaps, I decided, it would be best not to make the mistake of going there to find out."

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ALGARVE	18 June	7	Birmingham	SC	£149
COSTA BRAVA	30 June	7	Gatwick	BB	£149
TURKEY	23 June	7	Birmingham	BB	£149
MAJORCA	14 June	7	Gatwick	BB	£159
RHODES	10 June	14	Gatwick	BB	£159
TURKEY	10 June	8	Birmingham	BB	£169
IBIZA	3 June	7	Stansted	SC	£169
CHEKE	11 June	7	Stansted	BB	£169
MAJORCA	18 June	7	Newcastle	SC	£169
GRAN CANARIA	11 June	7	Manchester	SC	£179
LANZAROTE	17 June	7	Gatwick	SC	£179
TENERIFE	7 June	7	Gatwick	SC	£179
CORFU	2 June	7	Gatwick	SC	£189

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TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

**INDEPENDENT**  
ON SUNDAY



**Wardrobe workshop**

Part one of our great new fashion series shows you how to keep your cool in the office this summer

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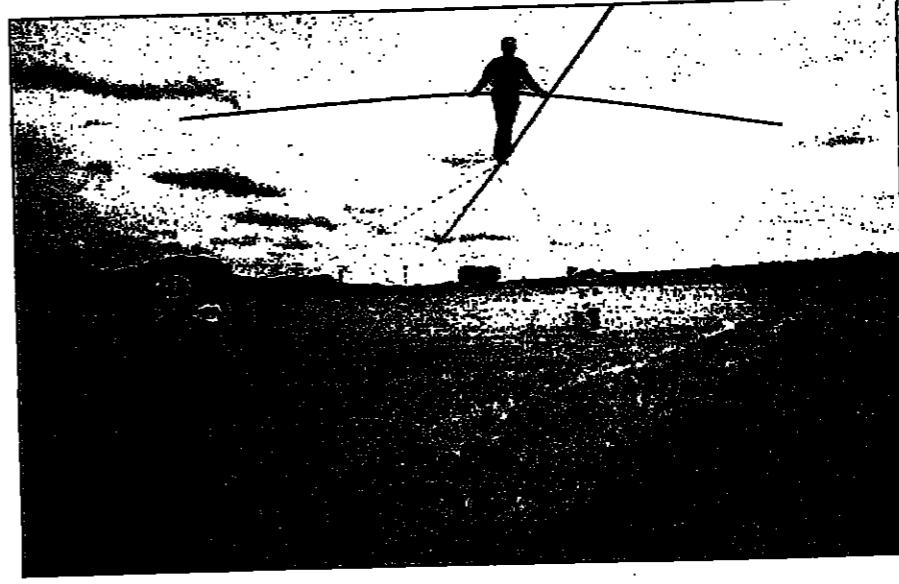


# TIME OFF

## TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 2 May 1998

### WORLD PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE YEAR



Yesterday we reported that *The Independent* had collected the prize for Best Use Of Photography in the 1998 Newspaper of the Year Awards; today we celebrate our most powerful photographs from abroad. Often it is not the most obvious images that make a picture: Tom Pilston virtually stumbled across expatriate revellers running along a Hong Kong back street celebrating the handover, while in India citizens throughout the country were celebrating the 50th anniversary of independence, captured here by Andrew Burnham. Brian Harris was the first to show the world the extent of damage within the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi after the earthquakes, and, on a lighter note, David Rose shared the joy of French acrobats practising near Paris for their epic tightrope crossing of the Thames.

Moira Fraser

To order a print of any of these pictures call 0171-293 2534

#### INSIDE

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48 hours in Nice

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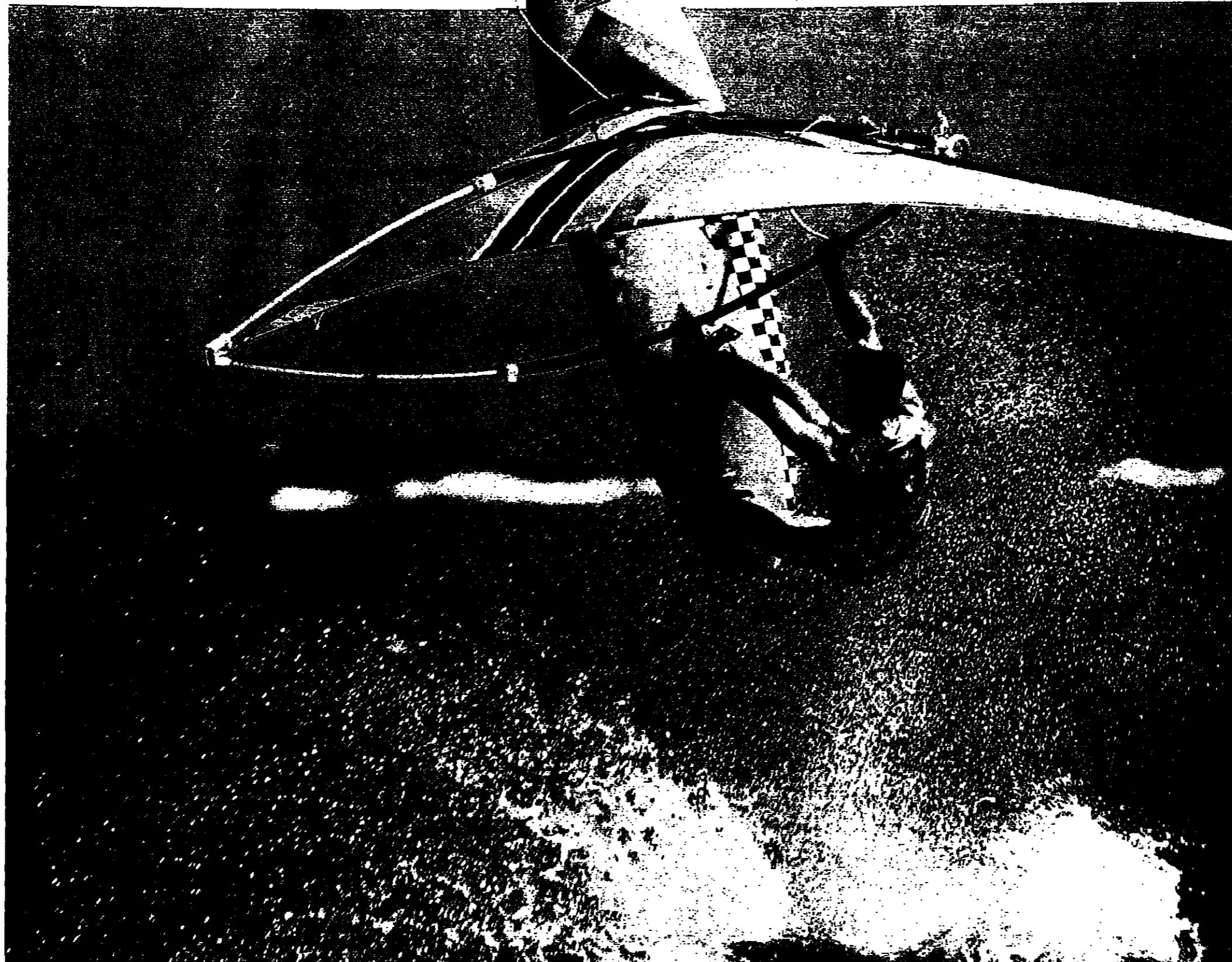
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RICARDO COOPER

SIMON CALDER

One soon-to-be-famous hotel features in one of the deluge of summer '99 brochures that submerged my desk this week: the Sultan Palas in southern Turkey. The peaceful residence is just too remote for most holiday-makers and tour operators - which makes it ideal for the makers of a marvellously mischievous new documentary series. The hub of *The Tourist Trap* (Channel 4, Tuesday, 9pm) is: what do German tourists do if a hotel has only half the requisite number of sunbeds? And how do Japanese, American and British holiday-makers cope with the same crisis? In order to confirm or confound national stereotypes, the Sultan Palas Hotel was converted into a human laboratory.

Here's how it worked. The production company, Windfall Films, placed advertisements in the UK, the US, Germany and Japan, offering free holidays. From hundreds of applicants, 30 were chosen from each country. The only condition was that the participants agreed to be filmed, though most of the British contingent seemed to assume it was some sort of timeshare scam.

Each nationality was assigned a separate week at the Sultan Palas, during which everything was engineered to ensure an identical experience to the other groups. When they arrived, they saw a standard television crew. What they didn't see was the 11 concealed cameras and 30 hidden microphones, linked by miles of cable and operated by remote control from the secret bunker where the production team hid for a month. No "docu-soap" this: the programme heralds a whole new TV genre, which you could call a flea-on-the-wall documentary.

The programme-makers also neglected to tell the cast that, among their number were a couple of stooges - actors, briefed to commit all manner of anti-social acts, such as lighting up on a non-smoking excursion coach.

Whatever their effect on future bookings for the Sultan Palas, the results make gripping television. From the evidence of the first programme, though, the British are not going to dazzle with decency. We coped creditably well with the moustachioed proprietor's unnecessarily slurry welcome kiss to every new arrival, male and female alike (this is Channel 4, remember). But when one of the stooges began stealing drinks from the bar, the British and Americans both connived. The Germans and Japanese respectively ostracised and shopped the offender.

And that hoary old German/sunlounger stereotype? As they quickly discovered, by deftly separating the mattress from the sunbed, the number of loungers can instantly be doubled. Did I catch a muted but triumphant "Vorsprung durch Technik" on one of the hidden microphones?

## Gone with the Windwards

"Salut." From beneath the low trees that shade the beach, a tall, strapping character called out to the crew. Stooping, he strode out to meet them, a red bandanna at his neck and thongs on his feet: "Late again, as usual." Three hours patiently teaching novice *plancheurs* was no excuse for being late with the lunch.

Thursday lunchtime, and a barbie on the beach. A hundred hungry windsurfers had crashed out in the shade: rasta drums thundering in our ears, memories of the morning's class ringing in our heads.

Welcome to Guadeloupe. This Caribbean island was spotted by French sailors back when a boom was something you heard from an enemy port hole. Shaped like a butterfly, the island is half rugged mountain, half flat as a crêpe. Around the flat area winds are so big that the explorers called the place Grand' Terre; yet the soaring, rainforest-covered heights of the west of the island block any wind that blows, so the sailors named it Basse Terre. Today, the wind still blows, and the entrepreneurs of Grand' Terre's southern coast are cleaning up on catamaran rental, yacht cruising and, most of all, windsurfing.

The Guadeloupeans have taken to windsurfing like wind-assisted ducks to water. The Alize blows from the east pretty much all year, and at St François, half-way along the southern strip, a large lagoon provides

Guadeloupe is a water sports paradise. Dave Harvey found it the ideal place to learn how to carve gybe

a playground of flat, shallow water perfect for tubby Europeans to learn and lean locals to pose.

And windsurfing is the perfect pose. The St Franciscans have that easy, effortless grace, carving white arcs in turquoise water just yards from the gallery of sun loungers, flipping fluorescent sails to a new tack with one languid hand, then snapping the rig back into the wind and soaring off to the horizon. While we struggle like gangly schoolboys on a Surrey square and flop into the water, they lark around in baggy shorts and wraparound shades, twisting impossibly into helicopter turns as if Mr Beaufort would his scale to their orders.

You can, of course, sail anywhere in the Caribbean. But windsurfing is rather more demanding: the wind must be strong close in, and preferably blow across the shore: the best water is flat, protected from Atlantic rollers by a friendly reef. St François has all these.

The first times we came we'd arrive early at the Fanatic Centre to grab a couple of Snakes - the ideal improving board. But daily over the *pain au chocolat*, and you'd lose them to a van full of Germans.

Then one day we noticed a fleet of green-fringed sails gybing in the western end of the lagoon. We followed them back in, beached our Snakes by the hexagonal wooden lobster cages on the fishing port, and walked curiously round the rocks. A volleyball net, a sprawling pavilion surrounded by hundreds of pink, blue and green monofilim wings and racks of boards. Had I died and gone to heaven? Was the Planteur du Paradis I drank at lunch time doing its work? No, we'd stumbled upon the UCPA (Union des Centres Sportifs de Plein Air).

Wherever the tricolour flies, the UCPA has a site on the beach or piste: skiing, sailing, diving, mountain biking, paragliding. At St François £350 a week gets you a clean, simple bungalow *à deux*, three meals designed for *plancheurs*, three hours instruction a day and all the kit you can handle. The Guadeloupe centre sleeps 120, and I counted 90 short boards for experts, as well as more than 100 for the intermediates or beginners that the UCPA's eight instructors teach each week. We found someone who

looked as if they were in charge and booked a fortnight.

The reef is a dream for lessons, popping up obligingly little sandbars to perch on 400 yards out. We went out with Thomas who showed us the carve gybe - the holy grail of the sport. It was as if Courtney Walsh had strolled along the beach and offered an impromptu bowling surgery. Dudes just don't give up their secrets this easy, yet there was Patrice teaching the advanced class that helicopter turn. How, I wondered, would they impress the tourists at the hotel now?

There's only so much education a red-blooded Englishman can take, though, and by Thursday it was time for a trip to Les Saintes. A great opportunity to remind the locals that these little islands had a grand stand view of English sailing might in the 1700s, when our boys beat the French and "sailed" Jamaica. Nowadays canons and grapeshot have given way to catamarans and snorkels in the bay, and they'll sell you aphrodisiac cakes as you get off the two-hour ferry. And, oh - ask for a hat. They're the most ridiculous you'll ever find.

*The maximum cost of a fortnight, all in, at UCPA Guadeloupe is £1,113 including flights from Paris. You can book in the UK through Action Vacances on 0161-442 6130.*

### A plane

Virgin has vowed to undercut Go, British Airways' low-cost offshoot, on flights to Italy and other destinations from London Stansted. Richard Branson signalled a fares war when he told *The Independent* that Virgin Express would offer connections via Brussels from the Essex airport at lower fares than the new no-frills carrier: "We wouldn't take on BA and not give them a run for their money. It'll be much cheaper to go on Virgin Express."

Go (0845 60 54321) begins non-stop flights to Milan on 22 May, and starts flying to Rome the following day. Tickets to both destinations cost £100 return. Virgin Express (0800 891199) is currently selling flights to Milan in May for £95 return.



### A boat

QE2's season of transatlantic crossings between New York and Southampton starts on Thursday with a departure from Manhattan. The first westbound voyage is on 29 May, and sailings continue monthly until 14 December. Call Cunard on 01703 634166.

### A train

The first Reader's Page in the Thomas Cook *Overseas Timetable* has proved intriguing. On Sudan Railways, reports Jean-Philippe Wispeleare, "The train conveys 20 carriages worth of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class seating and a homicidal dining car. The 713-km journey takes an unbelievable three or four days, depending on how many carriages detach themselves half-way, and whether the driver decides to turn back and collect them."

Mr Wispeleare also counsels against tackling the Sudan-Egypt frontier: "The entire border is sealed and should only be crossed by those capable of outrunning rocket-propelled grenades."

The May/June edition of the timetable is just out, and costs £8.40.

### A room

The Club Punta Grande, on the Canary Island of El Hierro, is said to be the smallest hotel in the world. Just four rooms have been created from what was originally a coastal fort. Corona Holidays (0181-530 3747), which makes the claim, sells a twin room for £42 per night, including breakfast, during most of the coming winter. Readers may wish to get in touch if they believe they have found a smaller hotel.

### A meal

While in the Canaries, sample some *viandas* (parrot fish) and *gofio* (bread made with wheat, maize or chick-pea flour) - that's the recommendation of *Get By in Spanish*, an all-in-one language and travel guide

published by BBC Worldwide. The book also warns: "Restaurants have relatively strict opening times, and it is almost impossible to find one that will serve you outside these times." The guide costs £9.99 with an audiotape, £4.99 without.

### A week from now...

... you could join a voyage slicing through northern Scotland aboard *Fingal of Caledonia*, a 126-foot Thirties barge that started cruising last week and continues until late October. The vessel sails along the Caledonian Canal between Inverness and Fort William. The voyage lasts six days, with options for hiking, sailing, windsurfing, cycling and canoeing. Most places are taken, but space is available for next Saturday's

departure, price £330 through Caledonian Discovery (01397 772167).

### A month from now...

... *Ride Worldwide* takes its first tour of the summer to the foothills of the Karakorum and the Kalash valley of Pakistan. The price is around £1,200, excluding flights to and from Islamabad; call 0171-735 1144.

### A year from now...

... the first *Premier Gold* passengers will be enjoying wider seats and more legroom on Airtricity holiday flights. The extra cost: £39 to nearby destinations such as Majorca and Malaga; £59 for longer hauls to Turkey and the Canaries; £99 to Florida; and £149 to the Caribbean.

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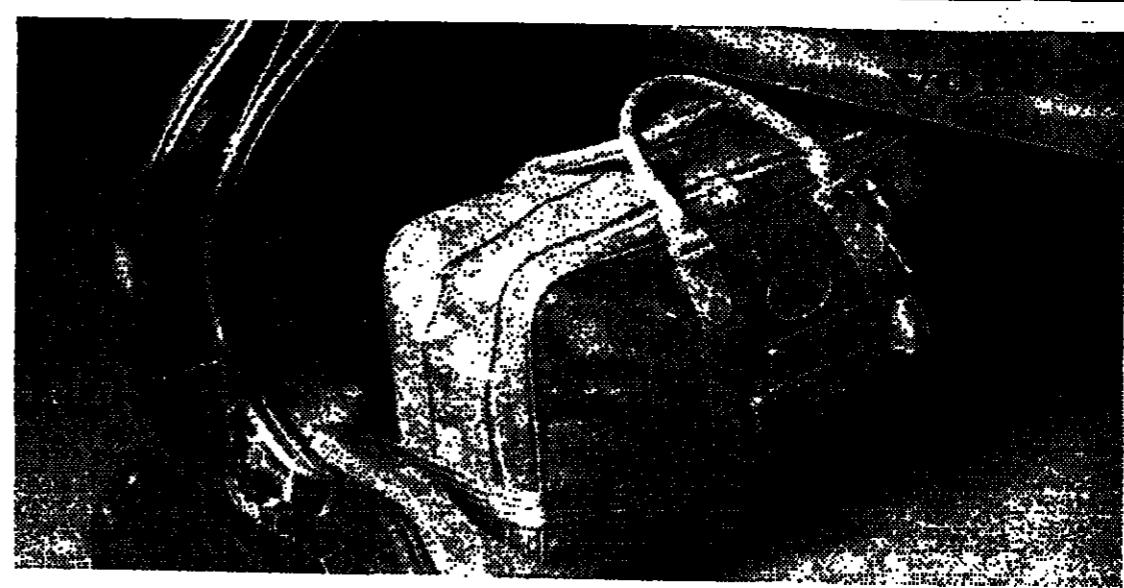
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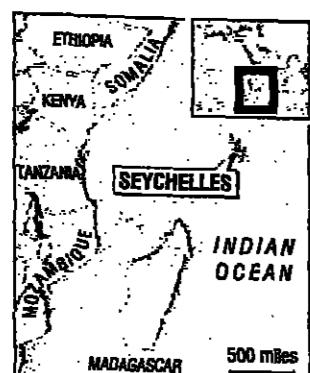
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# Islands of the blessed



The Seychelles are paradise, writes Cleo Paskal. But how to decide: birds or parrot fish, swimming or tropical forests? And alas, heaven doesn't come cheap

In the late 19th century, General Charles "Hero of Khartoum" Gordon declared the Seychelles the original Garden of Eden. He based this largely on having taken a good look at the coco-de-mer palm. This is how he described the nut that grows on the female tree: "Externally it is shaped like a heart, when opened out it is like the belly and thighs. Inside is a pink transparent jelly-like substance. It is this unique tree which I think is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil."

If he needed further proof, he had only to look at the male coco-de-mer. When it is ready to pollinate the female, it grows a long, dangling, er, thingy, which in its most provocative phase is covered in lurid yellow-red flowers. The coco-de-mer is the national plant of the Seychelles.

But even if botany isn't your favourite indulgence, it's easy to find a private Eden of your own somewhere among the country's 115 or so islands. Geologically, they are spectacular. While the southern part of the chain is your usual perfect coralline tropical island paradise, the northern part is unusually, granite.

Each island has its speciality, but the best one from which to base yourself is Praslin, a 15-minute flight or a three-hour boat ride from the capital island, Mahe. From there you can take day trips to a range of mini-Edens: Cousin, Curieuse, La Digue and others.

Cousin is a bird reserve, a stop-off point for a slew of migratory species and a permanent home to rare fowl such as the Seychelles magpie robin. The birds are so secure on their rat- and cat-free island that some nest on the ground. Ornithologists go a bit nutty here and local rangers are founts of endless knowledge. But if the noise (and smell) of hundreds of thousands of birds doesn't impress you, can track down a giant tortoise. They love having their oddly cold and leathery necks stroked.

Curieuse, a one-time leper colony, is the regional headquarters of the Marine Parks Authority. If you time it right, you can see sea turtles coming in to lay their eggs, or hatchlings scrambling towards the sea.

La Digue, Tony Blair's vacation choice, is a picturesque island with almost no cars but lots of touristy ox-carts. If you fancy biking along the bays without getting run over by maniac Seychellois drivers, this'll be your Eden. But be warned: the beaches are beautiful to

look at, yet the island can get very hot and the swimming is lousy compared to the other islands. Tony Blair, no fool he, got around this by renting one of the few air-conditioned places on La Digue on one of the few swimmable beaches.

Some of the best beaches are on Praslin itself. The talc-fine white sandy beach of Côte d'Or bay stretches for miles and fringes the most swimmable waters I have ever been in. The water is warm, calm and heart-achingly clear. But, even so, it is not my personal Seychellois Eden.

The Vallée de Mai, in the heart of Praslin, comes close. It is a Unesco World Heritage Site and home of the only wild coco-de-mer forest. The 800-year-old palm trees create a vaulted canopy that dapples sunlight and shelters from the rain. Well-kept paths follow rivers and wind through pandanus groves. It is silent, except for the rattle of the enormous palms in the wind and the songs of the black parrots and tree frogs. It is like walking through a Hollywood-crafted prehistoric forest: all the atmosphere and none of the danger.

But my own Eden is like one of those ridiculously perfect dreams from childhood. Effortlessly hovering over rippling green glades and dense forests, you see all around you colourful creatures passing by, casting you the occasional curious glance. My Eden is snorkelling in Isle Aux Cocos Marine Park. Just opened to the public, it is accessible and pristine. The park rangers ferried my group to the small beach on Isle aux Cocos from our tour boat moored outside the reef. Overhead, graceful tropic birds with their long white tail feathers played in the thermals.

By the time I had waded out to waist-deep water, I was at the edge of the coral reef. We floated gently a metre or so above the forest of coral, some of it yellow, some blue, some white, all exquisitely. A young parrot fish, impossibly turquoise and pink, escorted me as I coasted over swarms of angel fish, blue-striped snapper, gliding rays and hawksbill turtles. I let myself be gradually carried by the current towards the deeper, darker, more complex waters at the far edge of the reef. It was paradise.

Until I spotted the shark. It was like the shadow of a nightmare, and made my heart stop. I looked closer. But not too close. Yep, white-tipped reef shark. A small one, maybe just over a metre long, probably harmless. But just in case, I headed back to the shallows.

Eden doesn't come cheap. The Seychelles government is focusing on high-end eco-tourism. To keep the country from being overrun by grubby backpackers who won't bring in enough money to justify their strain on the environment, the number of tourist beds has been capped at around 4,200. Often, the cheapest way to go is to book a package tour. For example, in the new Distant Dreams brochure from Cottages (0161-480 5799), a fortnight, half-board, at the Paradise Sun on Praslin in November 1998 costs £1,999 per person.

Travelling independently, British Airways and Air Seychelles each has two weekly flights from Gatwick to Mahe. Fares are likely to be lower on Air France via Paris;

through an agency such as Bridge The World (0171-911 0900), you would pay £631 in June from London, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Manchester or Newcastle.

In Victoria, on Mahe, I stayed at the Hilltop Guesthouse for around £25 a night. On Praslin, we stayed at the Paradise Sun, which was superb but expensive - around £150 for a double with B&B - and at the Berjaya Praslin Beach which had an Easter special rate of about £70 for a double with half board. On La Digue we stayed at a place I would not recommend. Tony Blair stayed at L'Union self-catering chalets: £205 for a chalet that holds up to four people in two bedrooms, plus £28 per person half board.



Eden-under-sea: coral gardens in the Seychelles

Photographs: Pictures Colour Library

## White sands, tasty crabs

Where do you go for wildlife, magnificent beaches and the ultimate cowboys and Indians story? Florida, writes James Fox

The map said I was in Florida, but the waitress sounded pure Georgia as she put the plate of seafood in front of me. "The way I see it, food ain't food if it ain't fried," she drawled.

I was in Julia Mae's on US 98, south of Tallahassee.

Hereabouts is where the Florida Panhandle starts, and I had come in search of the strange natural phenomena known as the barrier islands.

Stretched out along the coastline of the Panhandle in the Gulf of Mexico, these are composed entirely of dazzling white sand. They are fairly remote and quite unspoilt. They got their name because they form a natural barrier against the storms that can swing in off the Mexican Gulf with great ferocity.

As I drove along the coast of Apalachicola Bay, with Julia Mae's behind me, I had the choice of three islands. I went for the biggest, St George, because I could drive out to it over a four-mile-long causeway at Eastpoint.

Driving past beaches and dunes as white as salt, I felt I was in a TV commercial - everything was dolled up just a little beyond reality.

I had plenty of time to get over the sensation, though, for St George has 27 miles of unspoilt beaches. After a while I ditched the car and went for a walk along a beach. I might have been Alexander Selkirk cast ashore by Dampier; there was nothing but white sand, pounding waves, and the tufts of sea oats and scrub grasses.

At the eastern end of the island I came to the St George Island State Park,

which has a nature trail and two campsites. Then I drove back to the small community of cafés and bars that, along with the characterful St George Inn, constitute social life on the island.

Here, over a beer, I chatted with a local fisherman who explained that the water between the islands and the mainland (and they are properly called lagoons, not rivers or canals) is teeming with life. Blue crab, five-lined skink and brown pelican can be found here, as well as the oysters. And what oysters.

Driving past beaches and dunes as white as salt, I felt I was in a TV commercial - everything was dolled up just a little beyond reality.

They are more problematical, in that a boat is required. Dog Island, to the east, boasts the highest dunes in all of Florida, and has a small, permanent population. St Vincent, nine miles offshore, has rare sanbar deer (originally from India) and the captive-bred red wolf.

Naturalists are drawn to the array of habitats - fresh-water lakes, oak ridges, pine forests and cabbage palm hammocks.

Back on the mainland, I travelled west to what is sometimes called the Redneck Riviera, with its predictable Coney-Island-style attractions. Off Palm Beach, though, lies a unique barrier island. By some quirk of coastal currents and topography, Shell Island sees vast quantities of seashells washed up on its seven miles of beaches. Three-hour collecting trips are a regular feature, operating out of a couple of marinas - Captain

Anderson's and Hathaway. Some of the Panhandle's barrier islands belong to the Gulf Islands National Seashore (in other words, they are a protected natural treasure) and that is where I was headed next. To get there I made for Pensacola, more than 200 miles from Tallahassee and within spitting distance of the Alabama state line. From there I took the three-mile

more than 290 species of bird spotted here. And Geronimo was brought here in 1886.

Twenty minutes later I was heading west towards Fort Pickens, where he was held. I felt like a lone cowboy riding into a ghost town, as I approached this forbidding-looking place. There was not a soul in sight.

I locked the car and started towards a sign announcing "Visitors' Center". Inside, an elderly lady behind the desk seemed glad to see me. And to talk about Geronimo. Oh, he was a bad Indian, and no mistake; the Apaches were the cruellest. Why, they made the little boys pull the legs off - did she say chickens? "Take the passage opposite till you come to a gate marked number four," she said eventually. "That's where he lived."

Geronimo's quarters consisted of a couple of rooms linked by a dark passageway. I stood in the larger of the two, in the dim light from the low, barred window. Even at midday it was dark enough to give me camera shake. I was glad to get out of the place and

breathe again. On an open expanse of ground, beside a battery, a cannon stood as though ready for action. Geronimo had strolled these very grounds, becoming something of a tourist attraction. By all accounts, he was a canny old operator and capitalised financially on his new-found fame.

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and glamour of the Gold Coast or the ersatz attractions of Disneyworld. But for a sense of adventure, nature in the raw and room to roam without trampling over other holiday-makers, you can't do much better in the US.

Flights to Miami are being sold cheaply during May, with discount agents offering BA non-stop from Gatwick or Heathrow for under £300. Car rental is around £30 per day, fully inclusive.

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# 48 hours in Nice



Nice, a curious mixture of Mediterranean village and affluent city

Photograph: Ellen Rooney/Robert Harding Picture Library

People-watch on the promenade, contemplate the colours of Chagall's stained glass, and take a cruise to Saint-Tropez: Cathy Packe makes a spring visit to the home of dainty biscuits

#### Why go now?

Early summer is perfect in the south of France because you won't find it full of French tourists; they don't arrive until July and August, when they pour on to the autoroutes from the north, and stay for a month. You should also be able to avoid the World Cup if you wish (unbelievably, there are people who couldn't care less about football); the nearest matches are being played three hours along the coast in Marseille.

#### Beam down

The cheapest flights from the UK are operated by EasyJet (0990 292929) out of Liverpool; in May there is a promotional fare of £29 one way. The airline also flies from Luton, and fares start at £49 one way. British Airways flies from Heathrow and Gatwick, and British Midland operates a code-share from Heathrow with Air France. From the airport - conveniently placed at one end of the Baie des Anges - it is a short bus ride into the city centre. Buses leave every 20 minutes from just outside the arrivals hall, and stop at various points along the Promenade des Anglais before turning into the place Masséna.

Alternatively, pay £109 from London by train via Lille or Paris with Eurostar (0345 303030).

#### Get your bearings

Nice nestles between the sea and the mountains, equidistant from Cannes and the Italian border. Even in summer, the peaks of the Alps are covered with snow. The town is a curious mixture of old Mediterranean village and affluent city, with an extraordinarily grotty part in the middle. On the seafront, half-way round the bay, is the casino, and off to the side is the place Masséna, more of a commune than a square. The main commercial street, the avenue Jean Médecin, goes off at right angles, and leads up to the station and into the hills beyond.

#### Check in

You can pay as much or as little as you want for a hotel in Nice. The grandest is the Hôtel Negresco at 37 promenade des Anglais (00 33 93 16 64 00), overlooking the bay and with its own private beach, but if you are not planning to spend your entire stay in the hotel itself, there are other places to be. My favourite area is just around the place Masséna, which is handy for the beach, the old town, and the bus back to the airport. Try the Hotel Kent at 16 rue Chauvin (00 33 93 80 76), or the slightly cheaper Hôtel Acanthe (00 33 93 62 22 44) which is farther down the same road.

#### Take a hike

Aim in the direction of the old town, and meander through the streets. Go in the morning and drift round the market in the cours Saleya. Six days a week the stalls have mimosa, bougainvillea, honey, local wine, and vegetables that make you want to buy a baguette and start making ratatouille. On Mondays, produce stalls make way for the flea market.

#### Lunch on the run

Ignoring the incongruous Cyber Café Internet, and the ubiquitous McDonald's, there are any number of cafés on the cours Saleya where you could stop for a pizza or a salade nicoise and a carafe of Côtes de Provence. If you only want a snack and don't feel like sitting down, treat yourself to a piece of socca from Teresa, who serves slices from her hot plate in the middle of the market. A socca is a local speciality, rather like a pancake but made from chickpeas, which leaves it slightly sticky in the middle; it is liberally peppered.

#### Cultural afternoon

There are several worthwhile museums to visit, should you feel the urge to tear yourself away from the beach. Like many places on the Côte d'Azur, Nice has been the home of various artists, and there are interesting galleries containing the work of both Matisse and Chagall. They can be reached on the number 15 bus which goes up towards Cimiez, although if you have the energy, it's possible to walk from the centre of town. Of the two, the Chagall museum is smaller, and, I think, more impressive - there is some beautiful stained glass, and a lovely music room with a piano decorated by the painter.

#### Window shopping

Best starting-point for scrutinising the world of *haute couture* is the aptly named Rue des Anglais, where you will find Chanel, Cacharel, Sonia Rykiel and Givenchy. They all have their own boutiques, and you will find a selection of designer clothes at Gladys. Fauchon and Yves Saint Laurent are on the avenue de Saxe. The windows in Galeries Lafayette, on avenue Jean Médecin, are nowhere near as appealing, but the prices may be more manageable. If you want a tacky souvenir, go into the food hall in the basement, where they are currently selling *Crème Footfall* - a sort of red *vin de pays* from the region, in a mouse-shaped bottle - sadly, not life-sized - for £2.50.

#### An aperitif

The bar du Donjon is at the top of the hill known as Le Château. As you face the sea, you can see along the Baie des Anges way down to your right, and the harbour below to the left. You can walk up the hill if you like, but there is a lift. It will cost you £3.50 in each direction, and it stays open until dusk. The view is worth seeing in daylight, but hang on as it starts to get dark, and you will see the lights switched on along the Promenade des Anglais. If you prefer to be part of the view, rather than looking down at it, try one of the bars on the beach itself. The bar at the bar on Opéra-plage always seems particularly good, but this may be the location as much as the quality of the wine.

#### Demure dinner

Unless you are allergic to seafood, you will find that one of the finest restaurants in town is the Grand Café de l'Irin, and its annex, Le Petit Turin, in the place Garibaldi. There you can order a mixed plate of various crustaceans, many of which you will never have seen before, and the price is fixed according to the size of the oysters you select. For 100F you will have more whelks, sea urchins and mussels than you will ever want to see, accompanied by a dangerous-looking selection of knives, forks and pins with which to encourage them from their shells. If you prefer your food cooked, try L'Oliver, in the same square. There are more tourists, but plenty of atmosphere, in the old town; however, be careful to avoid any restaurant that displays a menu in English.

#### Sunday morning: go to church

There is an Anglican church in the rue de la Buffa, but unless you particularly need to hear words you are familiar with, the Russian Cathedral, appropriately enough in avenue Nicholas II, off boulevard du Tzarévitch, has a simple service accompanied by haunting Orthodox chants. The onion domes are covered with ceramic tiles rather than gold leaf, but otherwise the cathedral looks as if it has been picked up out of a Moscow suburb and relocated in the sun. There is a service every Sunday at 10am.

#### Sunday lunch

For a proper French lunch washed down, as it should be, with some of the local wine, try La Criée, 22 cours Saleya (00 33 14 93 85 49 99). The restaurant is reasonably priced and has a menu full of local specialities.

#### A walk on the prom

The best walk in the south of France is along the Promenade des Anglais, the pavement that sides around the Baie des Anges, from the point where the harbour dips into the landscape, right round as far as the airport. Not everyone makes the trip on foot - many cycle or use in-line skates, and there are several places where you can stop to fish, or just sit and watch the world go by. The whole promenade is lined with expensive hotels and apartment buildings, all of which have spectacular balconies. Take a look at the "for sale" notices, and contemplate whether, in the long run, buying your own property is more economical than a series of weekend breaks.

#### The icing on the cake

What could be more relaxing than a Mediterranean cruise? Stroll round the harbour and find out what time the next boat is leaving for Saint-Tropez or the Italian coast. The view of the coastline from the water is unforgettable, as you drift past the headlands and islands, with the sun shining on the mountains.

## From ferry fodder to the gourmet delights of Dieppe

Hop across the Channel to Normandy for a gourmet feast, suggests Gerard Gilbert

Once upon a time, the port of Dieppe, nestling amongst the not-so-white cliffs of Upper Normandy's "Alabaster Coast" (the sea near the coast is indeed a sort of alabaster, thanks to the eroding chalk) was a prohibitive four-hour ferry journey away. After the best part of a morning chugging

across a choppy Channel from Newhaven, immersed in the smell of diesel fumes, frying chips and the occasional pool of vomit, gourmandising was the last thing the weary passenger had in mind as he disembarked in La Belle France. Stena-Sealink, as it was used to schedule some brave on-ship entertainment - bingo, high-kicking dancing girls complete with ostrich feathers (particularly good in force nine seas) and Hammond Organ-players covering the Fine Young Cannibals. "Caught in a Trap..." You sang along with feeling.

Eventually, though, you were more or less forced to partake of ferry food, the result being that the restaurants of Dieppe

got little change out of day trippers from Blighty, which was everybody's loss. Dieppe has some very decent restaurants indeed, brimming of fresh fish and crustaceans. But now P&O Stena - the latest incarnation on this route - has established a fast-ferry service taking just two-and-a-quarter hours. It's revolutionised Dieppe as a day-trip destination. Unlike Honfleur, which it resembles in size and, in my eyes, in beauty, Dieppe is not really a tourist town at all. It has a busy working harbour and imports large quantities of bananas and shellfish. Only chimpers would travel to France for bananas, but the small restaurants bustling along the quai Henri IV are stacked full of platters of fruits

de mer (lobsters, oysters, prawns, whelks, shrimps, cockles and winkles, displayed on a bed of ice and seaweed), not to mention the less ambitious mussels and chips.

Saturday is a perfect day to hop across.

Get up at dawn and catch the 6.45am fast ferry which will have you decamped in the centre of town in time to take advantage of the huge Saturday morning street market. Stalls range from massive displays of cheeses, sausages and fish down to local farmers with rickety trestle tables holding a few beetroots and eggs and a dead duck.

This is Normandy, so cream and cheeses crop up in the cooking - nowhere more deliciously than in *marmite dieppoise*, the

local fish stew. Just a few miles inland and you are into cider country, so apples and Calvados are also everywhere.

Put your feet up with an aperitif at the Café Tribunal, from where Oscar Wilde was banned during his exile in the town, and contemplate lunch. You'll still have time for a booze shop before the 5pm fast-ferry home.

**Dieppe diners**  
Le Melic, 2 Grand Rue du Pollet (00 33 35 84 21 19); despite its Michelin star, this is a friendly restaurant, and it has some exquisite seafood dishes. La Marmite Dieppoise, 8 Rue St Jean (00 33 35 84 24 26), is a well-established favourite with

both Brits and Dieppois, which means it can be very busy, but, as the name suggests, they make the *marmite dieppoise* here. Nice apple tart, too. Service can be maddeningly slow. Au Gran Duquesne, 15 place St Jacques (00 33 35 84 21 51); I had previously been avoiding this because it looked a bit of a tourist trap, but was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the cooking, the service and the extreme good value. You can eat well for 79F on the set menu.

**P&O Stena (0990 980980)** is offering a Saturday day-trip fast-ferry fare of £10, or £5 on other days. For a day out in Newhaven see page 6

## GREEN CHANNEL

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#### Recreational boating etiquette

• Make advance navigation plans before departure, and take note of shallow and fragile areas, and the influence of the tide, as low tide can create shallow conditions in otherwise navigable waters  
• Stay within marked channels, and be knowledgeable of the different navigation markers  
• Safety first! Carry emergency gear, tell people on shore what you are doing and where you are going, and be aware of upcoming weather patterns  
• Ideally you should undertake a boating course; this will improve your skills and safety and therefore reduce your impact on the environment  
• Use mooring buoys where possible, as improper anchorage can damage the environment  
• Keep a covered rubbish bin on board and ensure that people use it. Dispose of your trash at the marina. Reuse, reduce, recycle  
• Do not discharge sewage into the water; use

the nearest pump-out facility  
• Never discard fishing lines overboard  
• Do not drain engine fluids into the water

#### Snorkelling/scuba diving

• Do not touch living marine wildlife, such as coral and other animals  
• Do not collect souvenirs (shells, coral, etc)  
• Do not stand or rest on coral reefs  
• Never harass aquatic animals for amusement  
• Always be aware of your position in the water and that of your dive gear, in relation to marine animals and the coral reef  
• Remember to dive safely, in terms of both your own health and that of the marine environment  
• Review and update diving skills such as buoyancy control, finning and positioning  
• Do not feed marine animals

*The Ecotourism Society, PO Box 755, North Bennington, VT 05257, US (tel: 802-447 2121, fax: 802-447-2122, e-mail: ecomail@ecotourism.org, Web: www.ecotourism.org)*

## RED CHANNEL

On 22 April, the US Embassy in Moscow issued the following information through its warning system: "The Embassy has received reports that 'skinhead' groups have assaulted Asian and African students in Moscow."

"At 7pm on 21 April, over 20 'skinheads' severely beat two young Asian women in an alley between the Stary and Novy Arbat. There have also been press reports indicating that the same groups have threatened the lives of Asian and African students.

"The groups are primarily targeting the areas near the dormitories of the Russian University of Peoples Friendship (RUPF) and the Institute of Asian and African Countries (IAAC) of Moscow State University, located near Metro stations Yugo-Zapadnaya and Universitet respectively. However, these attacks can occur anywhere in Moscow. Police have already arrested some members of the groups and have increased their presence in these areas.

"The Embassy urges Americans, particularly students of African and Asian origin, to exercise appropriate caution."

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AUST

# French canvas



Camping may call to mind monotonous food and forced jollity, but Barbara Bleiman saw a different picture from a tent in the Auvergne

Every year it's been up there on our list of possible holiday options. Every year we've found some excuse to avoid it - children too young, too much of an investment in equipment, too much noise, too many other people, too little of the pampering we feel we've earned.

Last year, for some crazy reason, we decided to go for it. Well, perhaps "go for it" is putting it a bit strongly. Serious camping would have meant committing ourselves for the whole two weeks, buying a giant frame tent with an awning, a two-ring gas cooker, a little fridge, camp beds, electric lighting and a trailer to put it all into. Our version of going for it involved one trip to a camping shop to buy a big dome tent and two extra sleeping bags, and a quick rummage around the cellar to find the ancient gas camping stove that we took hitching round Greece 25 years ago. We couldn't quite bring ourselves to risk everything so we planned it as a little experiment: just three nights, sandwiched between stopovers with friends and bookings in hotels in France.

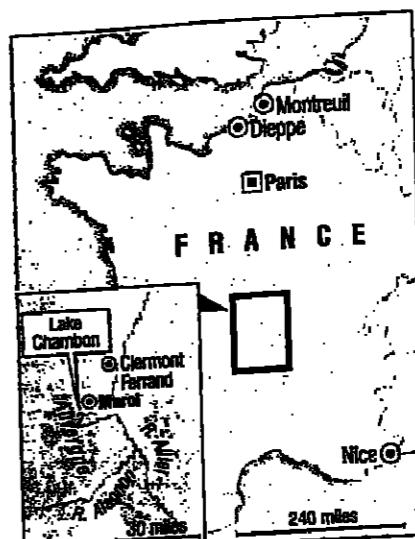
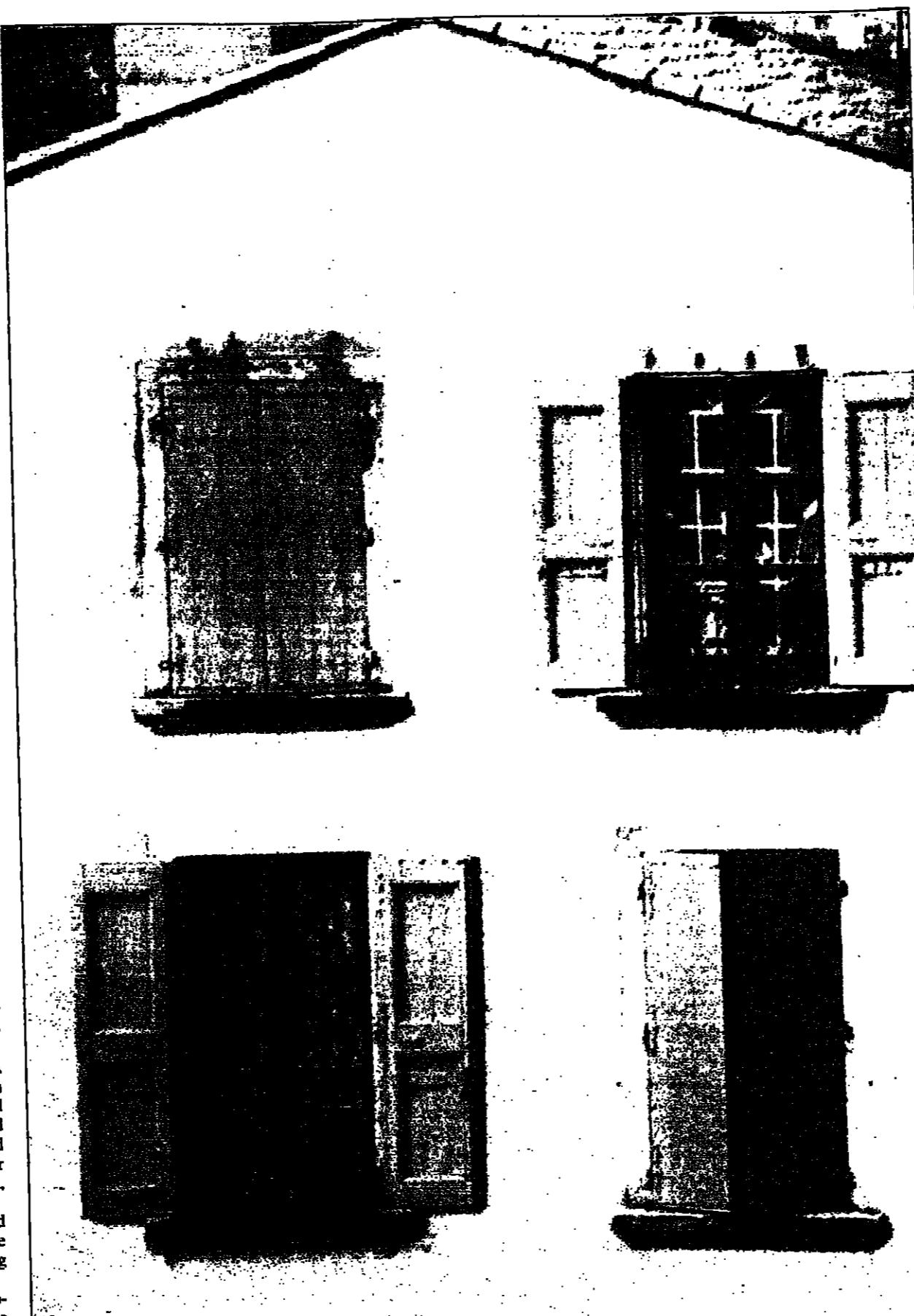
The children, now eight and 11, were full of optimism. Even an abortive trial night in the garden did not dampen their spirits - 10 minutes of rain and a clap of thunder had been enough to bring them back inside. Sitting in our friend's cosy, watertight house near Montreuil on the last night of our stopover and watching blankets of rain shooting down off the roof, I knew why we hadn't ever chosen a camping holiday before. Yet as we set off next morning, heading south towards the Auvergne, the storm clouds cleared and thoughts of fresh air and the great outdoors banished the gloom.

We had booked into a four-star site in Murol, a village near the lake of Chambon. It is a stunningly beautiful area, with plate-glass lakes, soaring mountains and swaths of green meadows.

On the campsite we were greeted with great *gentillesse*. A pathetically poorly phrased request for a quiet *emplacement* with *beaucoup d'ombre* resulted in us being guided by a friendly girl on a bicycle to a peaceful spot on the edge of a field, surrounded by trees. Our neighbours were two Dutch families. We later found that the campsites of France were refugee camps seemingly for the whole Dutch population, each with identical blond children, magnificent canvas palaces and gleaming new car.

As darkness fell on our first night, we zipped ourselves in and lay listening jealously to our Dutch neighbours sitting at their deluxe plastic table, with their lanterns and electric lights, chatting contentedly just two or three feet away.

By 11.30pm we were unzipping our sleeping bags and stomping off to remind them of the camp's night-time silence rule, ruing the day we ever thought of camping. At 6am the clattering and



Auvergne adventures: life under canvas (far left) can be just as appealing as the choice of more conventional accommodation  
Main photograph: Olivier Luc/Frank Spooner Pictures

clanking from the next-door tent had us in a frenzy of fury, but on poking my head out of the tent I found them climbing into their packed car and heading off towards Holland. I waved them off with a huge smile. Thereafter, we were staggered by the effectiveness of the silence rule, and had it not been for bumpy ground and old bones I would have slept soundly each night.

Campsites are a bizarre mixture of prison camp, theme park and grunge festival. You and all your possessions are alternately dusty and dirty, muddy and dirty or just plain dirty. Queues for toilets and showers never seem to be a problem for men, but women are up at the crack of dawn to avoid them and still find bleary-eyed fellow avoiders, in their nighties and cardies clutching a roll of toilet paper and hoping that the cleaning squad have got there before them.

Food on a single gas ring is not up to our usual Michelin two-star standards - a tin of pork cassoulet on the first night, a tin of duck cassoulet on the second night and, for a real treat, a tin of goose cassoulet on the third night. But the take-away food counter at the camp grocery provides you with chicken and chips, so long as you bring your own container. We got wise on the second day, when we realised that one portion of chips was equal to whatever container you provided.

Of course there were many more facilities: the swimming-pool to leap into, the organised games of pétanque, the drawing competition and fun run, the tennis and ping-pong, all of which had the children and partner racing off for more fun while I could sit quietly reading *E Annie Proulx* by the tent, soaking up the sunshine (but not too much, because our shaded *emplacement* has taken care of that). It was a real longed-for, doing-absolutely-nothing-not-even-visiting-that-castle-on-the-hill-style rest. And so it came as little surprise to us when, later in the holiday, sitting in a mediocre hotel next to a busy road in a bustling lakeside resort in the Alps, we all agreed that we'd rather be under canvas and decided to check out a campsite, preferring the queues for toilets, the dirty clothes, the monotonous meals and the organised fun to the anodyne pleasures of our usual holidays.

This year we're upgrading a bit; we may risk a whole week, and we'll certainly be taking a larger pot for those chips.

For more information on camping in France, contact the French Travel Centre, 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL (0891 244123, a premium-rate number). If you prefer not to get involved with putting up the tent, plenty of British tour operators offer holidays at sites with pre-erected tents in France and beyond.

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Colombia £469

# All quiet on the Western Front

From bombs to barracks, the Victorian coastal bastion of Newhaven Fort has a surprising appeal for children, as **Andrew Hasson** found out

In a warren of dark tunnels dug into the cliffs underneath Newhaven Fort, Daniel, only 18 months old, shouted and laughed at his own echo, delighted with this new form of magic. On the other hand, 12-year-old Nikita found it "spooky down there. It must have been a very scary place to be in the war."

There are plenty of hands-on activities: guessing wartime rations and prices, displays with buttons that light up parts of a model battlefield, and a quiz trail for children to follow. There is also an excellent play area for younger family members.

We emerged from the gloom of the tunnels, and climbed up to the gun emplacements on the cliff-top, guarding the entrance to the harbour. Here we stood on the edge of the Sussex coast, where the threat of assault felt all too real during the two world wars.

Newhaven Fort, finished in 1871 as part of a vast coastal defence programme, was useful during the 1914-1918 war, when this Sussex harbour became the main military supply port for the Western Front. It was well defended, but the attack for which it was so well prepared never materialised.

During the Second World War, the Luftwaffe tried, and failed, to do any lasting damage – and the 10-acre site now aims to tell the story of this conflict, and its effect on the ordinary people of the area. This it does successfully – and, of course, in beautiful surroundings. The fort has been run for the last decade by Lavers Dis-

The fort has been run for the last decade by Lewes District Council, which has just spent £200,000 upgrading the scheduled ancient monument.

Among the thousands of ferry passengers now passing annually through the port *en route* to Dieppe [see Gerard Gilbert's story, age 4], there can't be many who are aware of this Victorian coastal fortress. Yet the ferry itself passes within yards of the ramparts. A few of those passengers may be aware that Lord Lucan's abandoned car was found just down the road, shortly after his famous disappearance. (It is widely believed that he took the ferry himself, but I doubt whether he had time

took the ferry himself, but I doubt whether he had time for a visit to Newhaven Fort.)

For me, the charm of the place lies in its irregularity. Instead of the site being levelled and a regularly-shaped fort built on top, like the 70 or so constructed around the coast at the same time, this one was built into the terrain. Spread out below are the barracks. This terrace of brick buildings, built direct into the cliff, have today mostly been converted into display rooms. Inside the arched rooms, the excellent real-life sets have, among others, depictions of a blitzed house, the Home Guard and evacuees.

The Royal Observer Corps established a post at the fort in 1929 and, throughout the war that followed a decade later, visually monitored aircraft movements from all over the country. Two of the old barrack rooms tell the story of the corps: a wartime observation post and operations room have been reconstructed. There

## The visitors

Andrew Hasson took two of his sons, Harry, aged 11, and Daniel, aged 18 months, and a friend, Nikita Beahan, aged 12.

**Harry:** There were little model sets showing battles, and all the tanks and guns and stuff were set exactly as they had been. It was as if time had been rewound. The best bit was the bombed-out house, but it was fun climbing on the guns, too. The play area was good, because it makes children feel like being on an assault course. There's climbing stuff, swinging things and chains. The canteen had a really nice smell of coffee and the food was yummy. What they sold in the gift-shop was relevant; model planes and tanks and gas-mask holders.

**Nikita:** I was here last year on a school trip, and they've really improved it since then. The bombed-out house was realistic. There was lots of information. It was as if the model sets were actually talking to you. The atmosphere made you feel as if you were in the Forties, which is a good thing, but it was quite scary. It made me wonder how I would have coped and how I would have felt.

On top, the sea view is really nice. You can see down over all the boats in Newhaven harbour. You can also see all the fields over towards Lewes and down the coast to Seaford. The fresh air was brilliant. Even teenagers would like it. I love it.

Brighton and Eastbourne, on the A259 coast road. It is linked to Lewes and the A27 via the A26. There are regular trains to Newhaven Town from London Victoria, and from Brighton 12 miles to the west. Open daily from 10.30am-6pm (last entry 5pm) until 1 November.

**Admission:** adults £3.60, children (four to 15) £1.95, family ticket (two adults and up to three children) £10.50, senior citizens £2.95, children under four free. **Facilities:** some areas are difficult for visitors who are not fully mobile, although most of the displays are accessible with care.

**'It was as if time had been rewound': Harry Hasson and Nikita Beahan at Newhaven Fort**

Photograph: Andrew Hasson

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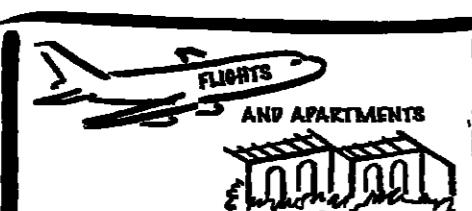
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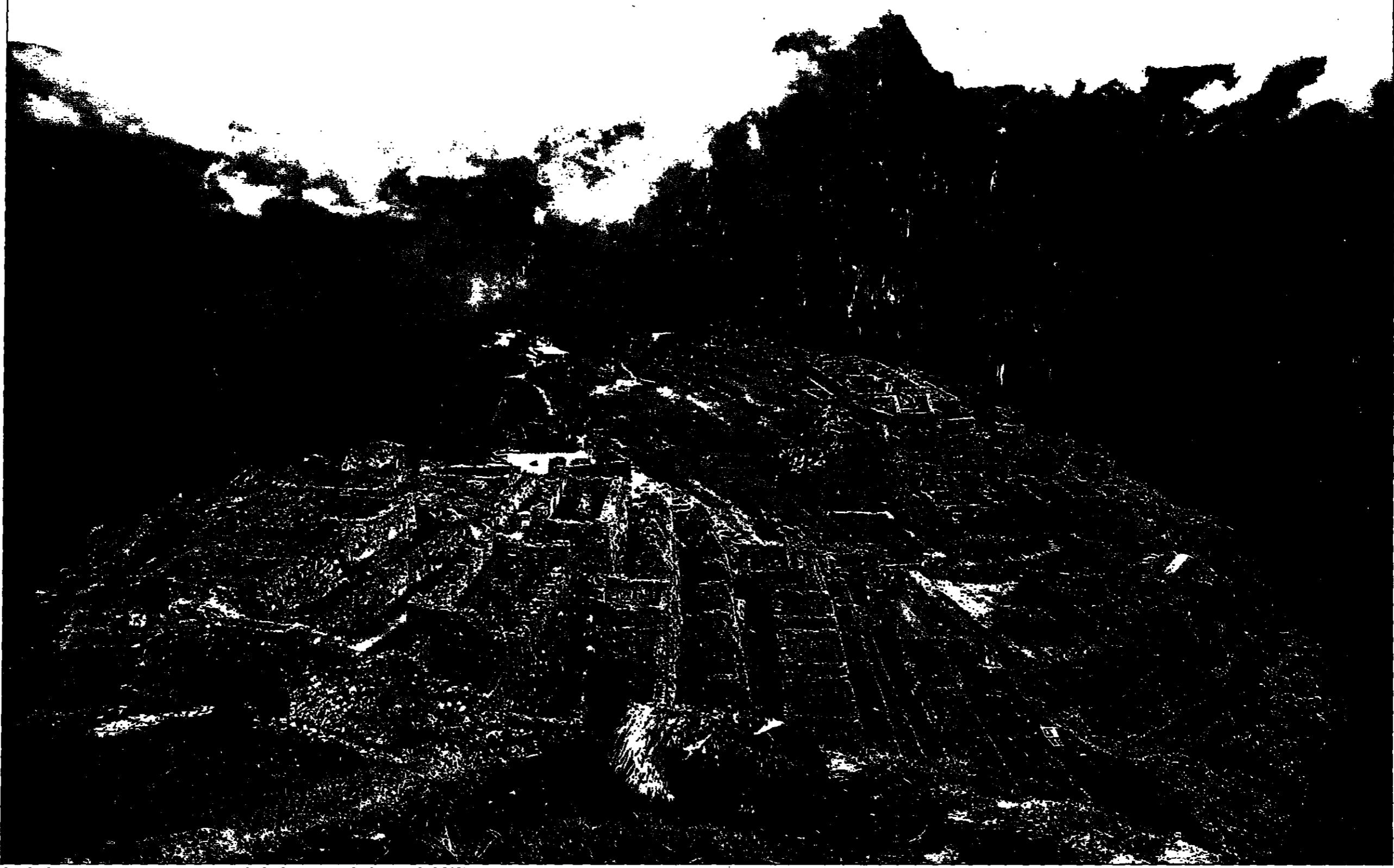
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# The moral high ground



On the Inca trail: the extensive ruins of Machu Picchu, perched at nearly 9,000ft

Photograph: Pictures Colour Library

There was a moment, as I scrambled upwards through the Andes, when I thought I might die. Dead Woman's Pass lay ahead. Nothing could have been more aptly named.

Clambering almost vertically, with a wall of mountain before my eyes, I found the air growing thinner and breathing ever more difficult. Above, the piercing blue sky seemed to extract the oxygen from the mountain beneath. Even the fleet-footed porters looked anxiously overstretched as they ran past. Conrad, a member of our party, had fallen into step alongside me. As if on some superhuman mission, we calculated every movement forward, 10 or 15 steps and then a pause.

"Please don't think you have to wait for me," I wheezed, my asthma for the first time a problem in our hike towards Machu Picchu, the legendary site of the Incas. "Don't worry," he said, in short snatches of reply. "You may notice ... that I have to pause ... as frequently as you do."

Our climb upwards had not been too tough at first. The worst of altitude sickness was past; our party had already spent a fortnight acclimatising as we travelled Peru in a giant truck. And the first day of

our 24-mile walk had been a moderate affair, to get us into the swing. Cactus vied with snow-topped mountains in the most spectacular of scenic views. Below us, as we walked one behind the other through the lower stretches of the Andes, a turquoise river flowed through the valley floor, tumbling round the boulders.

Our first night in tents, erected for us by our porters, had been cold – though not the coldest we endured. Not like the night at Chivay earlier in the holiday, where the water froze in our water bottles and the tents were stiff with ice by morning. At Chivay, even a sleeping-bag designed for temperatures down to minus 10 seemed little more protection than a sheet. And the truck refused to start next morning. Early winter in Peru makes for clear, warm, sunny days, but bitter nights.

Here on the Inca trail, life seemed less demanding at first. But after our easy introduction, this the second day of climbing upwards, was much much tougher. We set off all together, but the steepness of the journey, up through woods, mountain pastures and on to Dead Woman's Pass at nearly 14,000ft, soon separated us.

No one enjoys the thought that their holiday has damaged an environment. Louise Jury writes of a 'clean, green' trip to Peru – while Chris Walmsley admits that his own visit revealed the malign influence of tourism

Mark and Liz, our truck-driving tour leaders, leapt on ahead. Monica and Abigail close behind them, but, finding it tough, the rest of us struggled onwards at whatever pace we found tolerable.

Reaching the top, I staggered to the edge, refusing to join the first arrivals sitting waiting until I knew I had no farther to climb. The sight was astounding: miles of steep mountains, verdant with rainforest, with all the appearance of a virgin land from a past age. Conrad and I posed for congratulatory photographs. There was a real sense of achievement. Eventually, all safely reunited, we descended to where the porters had prepared lunch.

Sitting at our picnic tables on tiny, collapsible picnic stools, in our stout walking boots, we must have resembled one of the

more eccentric English dining societies. In three-and-a-half days climbing through the Andes we had some spectacular mealtimes, but possibly nothing as astounding as the panorama below the pass.

Our journey continued up and down original stone steps, some knee-height in depth, where the Inca messengers once ran from the distant city of Cuzco. By the fourth morning we were nearly at Machu Picchu. Rising in pitch blackness at 4am, we dressed, clumsy in the confines of our tents, and set out by torchlight. As the first grey-pink streaks of dawn illuminated our progress, we arrived at the Sun Gate and the vast city lay below us.

Known only to the local Peruvians for three centuries, Machu Picchu was revealed to the West in 1911 by an American archaeologist, Hiram Bingham, who

was looking for the lost city of the Incas. The 15th- and 16th-century ruins of temples and palaces, threatened last year by forest fires which made the site impassable for some weeks, are a United Nations heritage site perched at nearly 9,000ft.

For all our party, a mixed bag of mainly professionals in our thirties, with a young Oxford graduate and a retired chemical engineer at either end of the age spectrum, Machu Picchu was the highlight.

Over three weeks, we had explored the coast and the desert before travelling to the high inland plains. Sometimes we camped and cooked for ourselves with food from local markets; then, just when we thought we could not take another freezing night, a hotel would provide a touch of luxury.

At Nazca we had hired tiny four-seater planes to fly us over the mysterious lines, shapes of birds and creatures inscribed across the desert centuries before when flight was unknown, yet almost impossible to see at ground level. In the Colca Canyon, Peru's answer to the Grand, condors had soared above us. On Lake Titicaca we sailed in silence on boats of reed.

Yet the walk to Machu Picchu triumphed because it made us feel like explorers. In recent years, visitors had made the trail filthy with waste, but the route has been cleaned up and our tour leaders rigorously enforced the no-litter rule, so all around was only nature. The site is out of bounds to coach parties, because there is no road and you can arrive only on foot or by train.

Ours was an affable group of people, large enough to dilute the irritations that emerge in any organised group, small enough to maintain the sense of adventure. We had already formed friendships while jolting our way through Peru by truck. Nearly all of us walked the Inca trail. It was the kind of experience you call "bonding".

Louise Jury travelled with Exodus, 9 Weir Road, London SW12 0LT (0181-675 5550). She paid £1,460, which included travel and accommodation for three weeks.

For independent travellers, there are plenty of bargain air fares to Peru at present. For example, Iberia (0171-830 0011) is offering a fare of £533.50 from London or Manchester to Lima.

## NOT MAGICAL, NOT MYSTICAL, JUST A MISERY TOUR

I met a traveller in a London pub who had been to Central America and India, and was planning to tour Cambodia. He took a dim view of sanitised package holidays and organised tours to far-flung places, and a similarly dim view of people who go on them. We argued, and at the end of the evening he punched me several times in the head and stormed out of the pub.

I believe that people go on different holidays for different reasons, and they are entitled to do what makes them happiest. After all, that is what being on holiday is meant to be about. But I found myself in a dilemma on returning from an organised tour of Peru. As an independent traveller you choose your company and where you go, and you take pleasure in resolving the numerous daily mysteries and hitches that confront you. When you are part of a tightly planned tour, you cannot choose your companions and you find that someone else has already been paid to resolve all those daily mysteries and hitches on your behalf. And even if you are open-minded you find that you have prejudices after all, though not so strong that you are driven to beating a stranger into the ground.

Our tour was run like a military campaign from start to finish. There were briefings and debriefings,

dressing-up and dressing-down, and tardiness was a punishable offence. The leader had a curious way of barking instructions and ignoring group members' attempts to talk to him. He could not conceal his contempt for the locals whom he described as savages. And his dislike for the people he was leading

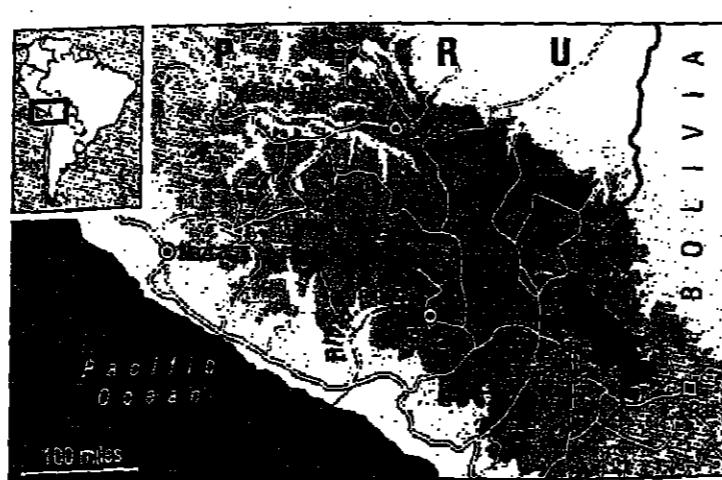
room on the first night. The following morning he was purported to say that complaining would be useless because "we are all old boys together back in England". A young Quixotic guide, stumbling miserably over her words, said the leader had told her that her mother was uglier than a mummy in the Gold

a makeshift washing-line. The women wore authentic straw garments over their shoulders, but the illusion was hopelessly dashed when one of them turned around and grinned, revealing a prominent bikini-line across her back and a mouth full of extensively crowned gold teeth. The chief of the tribe then gave a demonstration of his blowpipe during which he missed the target – a 2ft wide banana tree – four out of five times.

When asked how he managed to hunt, he explained that he preferred to blow monkeys out of the trees with a shotgun. Despite our reservations about poking around a traditional hut, we were urged to do so to witness the Yagua Indians' unchanged way of life. In this way we were also obliged to give them a tip of two sols on the way out. That is a lot of sols from a group of 10 people. As we walked away from the village, a radio whined out strains of Sheena Easton's "My Baby Works from Nine to Five", and I noticed a pair of brilliant white Nike trainers on someone's doorstep.

So perhaps you can appreciate my dilemma. There I was, clinging on to the moral high ground in a pub in central London, only to find that I am an embittered old hypocrite after all. I think I'll go to Antarctica on a shoestring next year and really punish myself.

Chris Walmsley



became apparent when he announced that he would gladly exchange two of the party for a "charming couple from Weybridge" whom he'd met along the Inca Trail. Rumours spread like the wings of hungry condors. One female member of the party alleged that the leader had propositioned her in her hotel

Museum in Lima. The lowest point of the tour, and perhaps the defining moment, was a visit to the Yagua Indians' village on the banks of the Yanaconca river. With advance warning of our arrival, they had dusted off their traditional costumes and strung out a motley collection of factory-produced tourist artefacts on

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A grotto brings Gothic fantasy to a garden. Kirsty Fergusson investigates the watery charm of the artificial cavern

I imagine I'm not the only person who has looked out at a waterlogged garden through rain-spattered windows over the past few weeks, finding consolation only in grimly ironic thoughts about "the new Mediterranean climate". But there are more positive ways of reacting - and getting stuck into a big project in the garden is one of the best. Particularly if it involves a bit of eccentric fun, hints optimistically at the need for a cool and shady retreat and calls for shell- or fossil-hunting expeditions.

You've done Project Pergola, Project Pool, Project Gazebo; but this is not the time for refinement, as the best is yet to come: Project Grotto. (And "grotto" is such a nice word to roll around your mouth that half the pleasure of making one must come from being able to give frequent exercise to the word in conversation.)

The first grottoes were found rather than made; caverns adjacent to or containing a sacred spring, where nymphs and muses resided and sibyls offered their consultancy services. But the ancients were enthusiastic builders of artificial grottoes and fountains in their gardens, too, although tastes were divided between the rustic look (lumpy tufa, shells and coral) and the architectural look (hewn stone, vaults and mosaics). This division seems to have permeated all the great eras and centres of grotto-building - Renaissance Italy, Baroque France, Rococo Germany, and England, where the grotto flourished as both a neo-classical and a Victorian Gothic phenomenon. But it's not a terribly important division; whichever taste you adhered to, the decoration was to be as fantastic as your purse would allow.

"It is a place capable of giving you so much pleasure and delight," wrote John Woolridge in 1677, "that you may bestow not undeservedly what cost you please on it." There were indeed a number of no-expense-spared grottoes produced around that time, in which the spiritual dimension became slightly submerged by all the extravagant artistry. Or, taking off on another kind of tangent, Pope's grotto in his garden at Twickenham ended up as a kind of mineral museum, with rare stalactites and chunks of the Giants Causeway lining the walls.

Perhaps these should be read as cautionary tales, because grottoomania is on the brink of making a comeback. Possibly it's because the message has got through that gardens are for fun, for experiment and imagination, in terms of both the plants and the architecture they support. The fabulous new grotto that opened in 1987 at Leeds Castle, in Kent, started the ball rolling. The entrance is at the centre of a maze and the subterranean chamber leads you back to the outside of this, a clever conceit. And I keep hearing of gardens in private ownership where grottoes are under consideration or even construction. The funny thing is that people are often quite coy about



Eccentric fun: entrance to the 16th-century grotto, Bomarzo, Lazio in Italy (above); Margaret Morgan-Grenville and her Dorset creation (left). Photographs: Garden Picture Library/John Lawrence

## Silent stream

wanting to have a grotto; inevitably, I've heard it said that a grotto marks you down as an extravagant eccentric, and the associations with spiritual mystery still cling from the earliest days.

I'm not so sure; it would take only the tiniest bit of spin-doctoring to present the grotto as a cool (in both senses of the word) adjunct to the New Garden. Take Candace Dahouth's work, for example.

Dahouth is an American designer, whose mosaics and needlepoint tapestries have won her great acclaim. She is currently engaged on the interior decoration of a newly completed architectural grotto for a private client. The construction is hexagonal, focusing on a mirrored basin into which flows water from surrounding temples. The vaulted ceiling is medieval blue, decorated with gold stars and clusters of shells at the base of the ribs. Fragments of mirror have been fitted amongst the pebbles and shells (her clients have amassed thousands from all over the world in the past 10 years) which cover the

walls in an abstract, textural pattern; the floor is made from artificial black ammonites. Candace Dahouth has spent the best part of a year working on this extraordinary project, which is now nearing completion. By candlelight, the tiny shards of mirror in the encrusted interior should make for a Baroque experience for which even Coleridge might have struggled to find words.

You could see that the two farmers standing on

the opposite bank of the river that forms the boundary of Margaret Morgan-Grenville's garden were struggling to find the right words to describe what, in its undecorated condition, resembled a pedimented sentry-box, constructed from breeze blocks, fitted snugly into the bank on her side of the river. "We've been wondering what you're building there," one of them finally hazarded across the water, "and we've come to the conclusion that it's a fishing-hut."

Margaret, a self-confessed grotto-lover, decided to build her own as an alternative to writing a book about them. She had started to research the subject when the idea came to her that it would be "much more fun" to build one and decorate it herself, than to write about other people's grottoes.

Her grotto faces west and has been placed to make the most of the evening sun, rather than to provide a shady retreat. The fossils with which she is covering the walls have come from local beaches (Lyme Regis is a short drive away) and piles of broken and whole ammonites and belemnites are being transformed into a crusty mosaic. All that it lacks at present is a motto, to be woven into the pattern. Any thoughts?

Candace Dahouth, Ebenezer, Pilton, Somerset BA4 4BR (01749 890 433)

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# Why cast out the woodlander?

Duff Hart-Davis meets 'Bodger' White, ex-Hammersmith, ex-Army, forest dweller and expert in sustainable silviculture, whose lifestyle is threatened by local regulations

If someone chooses to live rough in the middle of a forest, with the agreement of the owner, why should the local council seek to evict him? That is the question now being asked with some anger by supporters of Michael 'Bodger' White, who for the past two years has occupied an encampment in Ashdown Forest, high above the Cotswold town of Dursley.

Bodger, now 52, is known locally as an archetypal woodman, dedicated to coppicing and restoring ancient woodland; but in fact he has had a varied career. He was born in Hammersmith, the youngest of eight children, and has never lost his Cockney accent. Nor has he lost an arsenal of military invective acquired during six years in the Middlesex Regiment.

When he came out of the Army he went to work as a butcher in Berlin, where he married a well-to-do German girl – but the marriage lasted only a few months. Later he ran a business recycling paper and cardboard, and also what he mysteriously calls "a research business". Yet for the last six years he has worked – and lived – in woods in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.

He landed on his present site because the owner of the property, Alan Jones, a lecturer in building techniques, shares Bodger's interest in training young people in traditional country skills. Two courses had already been held in the wood, and Bodger's aim was to run others, but his hopes of getting grants have repeatedly been dashed, and battles with what he calls "the bureaucratic system" have left him with a bitter contempt for conservationist quangos.

His ramshackle establishment, which he shares with his handsome Alsatian Dylan, would win no prizes for style or hygiene. Although it includes a caravan, that is used only as an office; Bodger lives in a couple of spacious benders, propped up on slender hazel rods and guyed with baling twine. He cooks on charcoal (which he himself makes) in a portable barbecue. His oven is an old biscuit tin, in which he bakes his own pies. There is no electric



Bodger White Photo: M Bigwood

ity. Water comes from a butt that collects rain from the roof of two wooden store-sheds. He has a radio, but no television and no form of transport.

Twice a week he walks down into town, to stock up with supplies, and at weekends he sets out a stall on the pavement in the middle of Dursley, selling walking sticks, flowers made from wood and other rustic artefacts. Some people, seeing him there with his placards, suspect that he protests a bit too much – that he has been carried away by his own propaganda campaign.

(Last November, having put down a preliminary barrage of letters on the Queen, the Prime Minister, the Minister for the Environment and a few others, he marched all the way to London to plead his cause.)

Up on his own ground, however, his sincerity of purpose and his deep knowledge immediately become apparent. "This is a rarity," he says as he leads a visitor round, "a real mixed wood, with trees of different ages. We've got hazel, cherry, whitebeam, beech, oak, larch, sycamore, elm, silver birch...

"You can see it's been coppiced for

centuries. This beech stool is 600 years old – verified by two experts. That hazel stool's been cut all wrong. With hazel, you've got to suppress him – cut him off as low as you can, to force him to shoot at the sides. This sycamore, now – you can make loads of things out of that, cooking utensils for one. Conservationists hate sycamores. They cut them down and pour f\*\*\*\*\*g poison on them."

Hazel stools properly cut by Bodger are growing away straight and true. In eight or 10 years, the new shoots will be marketable as walking sticks or hurdles or rustic chairs. His whole theme is the sustainability of traditional coppicing – and, indeed, of his chosen way of life.

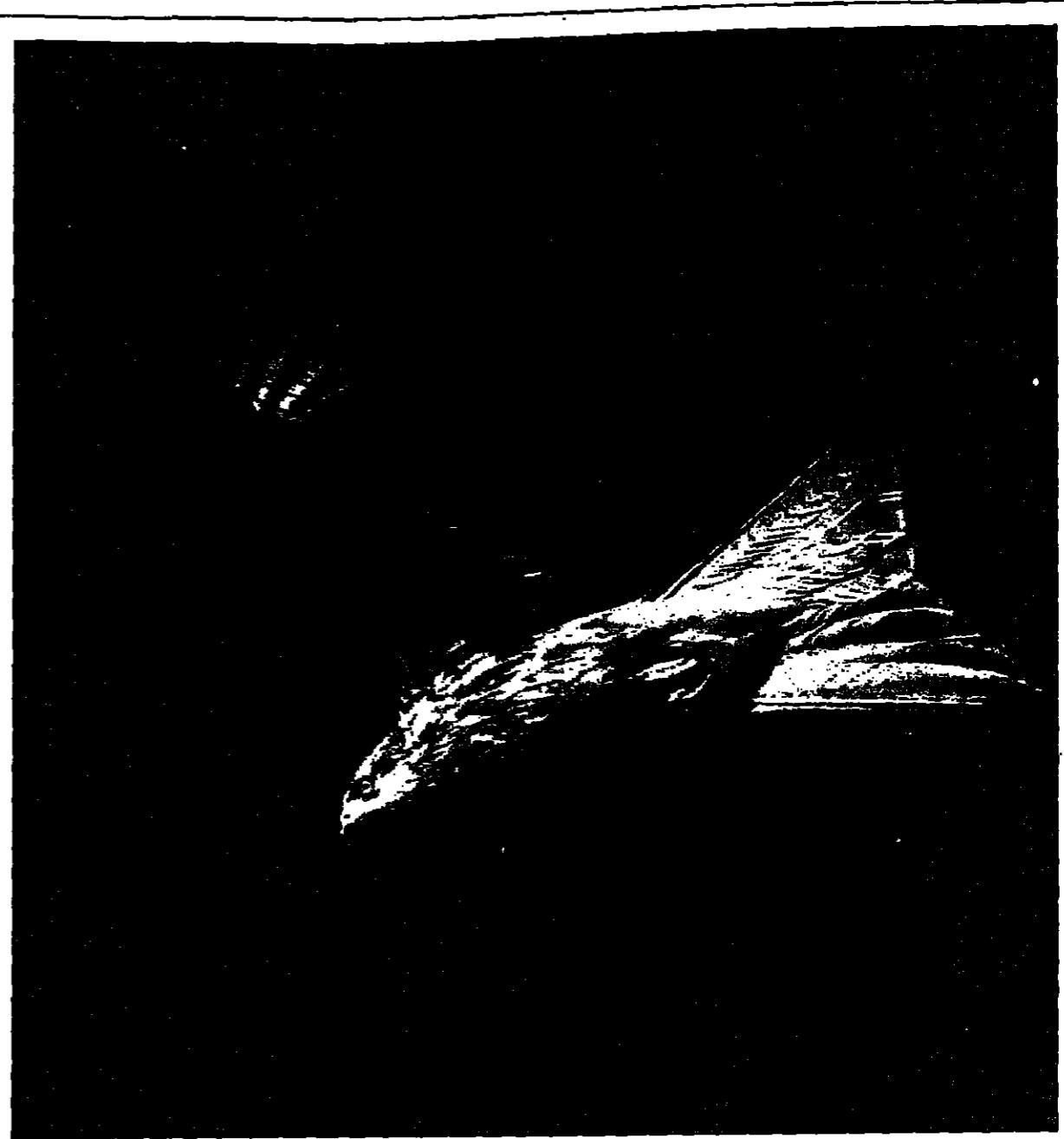
There are echoes here of Henry Thoreau, the American natural philosopher who, in 1845, abandoned his home in Concord, Massachusetts, and went to live in a log cabin in the woods, rejecting accepted social and political values. I doubt, however, that Bodger will ever write a book to challenge Thoreau's celebrated *Walden*.

His income is "practically zero", but because the authorities deem that he is working, he cannot go on the dole. Nor does he want to. He prefers living as he does in the silence and solitude of the wood, "with no noisy neighbours and nobody coming up and telling you what to do".

The trouble is that people are now telling him what to do. The local planning officer, after a visit, decreed that his occupation of the site constitutes a different use of the land – residential rather than silvicultural – and the council has issued notices ordering him to quit.

Is this not planning gone crazy? As Bodger himself points out, a bed-sitting room in Dursley would cost up to £80 a week, and if he were forced into one – quite apart from the fact that he would hate it – he would immediately become a burden on the state.

No wonder he fulminates against the excesses of our consumer society, and declares that he "can't see how civilisation can be sustainable, the way it's going".



## NATURE NOTE

With its large dimensions, slender wings and deeply forked tail, the red kite is one of our most spectacular raptors, and its re-establishment in England and Scotland has proved one of the most spectacular conservation successes of recent times. Although a few kites hung on in the isolated uplands of central Wales, those elsewhere were persecuted so drastically that they died out in the 1880s. Their reintroduction began in 1989 when the RSPB, working with English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage, imported young birds from Spain and released them at secret sites. Since then, the numbers have built up with amazing speed. In the 1997 season 51 pairs in England reared more than 100 young, and earlier this year a gamekeeper on the Wormsley estate in Buckinghamshire counted 70 kites in a single gathering.

Tagging and radio-tracking show that they are highly mobile. One bird, at least, has travelled from Scotland to Devon, and offspring of the original colonies have dispersed over wide areas. Their success appears to be due to an abundance of food and a good habitat. Largely carrion eaters, they probably benefit from road casualties, and in deer country such as the Chilterns they clean up the grallochs left by stalkers culling in winter. Because they rarely take pheasants or partridges, they do not generally worry gamekeepers. Nevertheless, several birds have been illegally poisoned, and one man was fined £1,000 after he had buried a kite, not realising that it was carrying a still-functioning radio transmitter in its tail.

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# A vicarious voyage around the world

The stuff of ... *exotica*. Sally Staples travels the globe in a small London shop

For those who cannot afford to employ the interior designer David Champion to create a new look for their homes, a trip to his small but perfectly styled shop in West London is an inspiration for ideas. Every available nook and cranny is crammed with treasures and designed to gratify the eye. Here the emphasis is on visual pleasure rather than practicality.

Juxtaposition, according to David Champion, is the key to good taste. His aim to create a calming environment by balancing different textures to create an aesthetic effect. Bamboo lamp-bases jostle with Burmese rice-carriers; a French bridge chair in fake elephant-skin sets off a South African township picture frame. Here is a reproduction Chinese screen in glitzy Vietnamese style, with a

£2,350 price tag; there is a pair of carved wooden Ethiopian chairs (£1,100 each). Incense sticks poke out of tall, elegant Vietnamese ceramic holders, and on the floor stands a Mexican sweet-mould made of wood, converted into a candleholder.

One wall is hung with a range of Moroccan mirrors made from bone and silver. Some designs are uniquely Champion, such as a pair of limed-oak lamp-bases turned by a specially commissioned craftsman in Norfolk. For the £780 each that they cost, you would not expect to find anything similar elsewhere.

It is a classy shop, to which clients return again and again to browse. There are no overbearing staff to bother you — merely a quiet welcome. And after half

an hour of wistful dreaming over the more expensive items, you find some consolation corners.

Downstairs, large ceramic bowls are filled with brightly lacquered Vietnamese pebbles in a range of colours, from £7.50 each. There are Indian saris and throws, Lebanese cushions, and bars of olive-oil and laurel soap for just £1.80. Or how about a hand-painted chapati-roller for £11.50? And certainly, decorative Mexican and tin obelisks, Ethiopian horn goblets and Vietnamese crackle rice bowls are features that will enhance a dull or faded background and bring new life into a tired old room.

David Champion, 199 Westbourne Grove, London W11 2SB (0171-727 6016)

More and more people are soothing themselves with the lathe, the gouge, the mallet and the rasp after a stressful day's work. Sally Staples joins the party

When Adam Ritchie began giving classes in wood-carving, he specialised in teaching people how to make decoy ducks. All varieties were carved by his pupils, who became experts on the finer points of the mallard and the pintail. But Adam realised, with growing fascination, that if he gave 12 students exactly the same pattern to copy they would all produce completely individual ducks. However new to the craft, they would each put something of themselves into the finished product.

"Now I like to keep the classes less structured," he says, "and pupils are encouraged to have a go at what they feel they want to carve. I'm not really keen on carving English roses, but if someone wants to carve them, of course I'll help. I try not to direct people too much. I will tell them the most efficient and quickest way to achieve an effect, and I never make them do anything that isn't necessary."

Beginners, however, often choose to start with a duck that is carved from two separate pieces hollowed out to form the body, with a third piece to make the head. Students at Adam's current evening

## How to carve a sitting duck

class have progressed to tropical fish, long dishes, African heads, and, in one case, a kitchen cupboard.

Adam teaches at the Kensington and Chelsea College and his pupils — several of whom are teachers themselves — are mostly people who come to unwind for the three-hour evening session after a busy day's work. He provides all the tools, so there is no need to buy anything before joining a class.

He has dozens of different-sized gouges, mallets, clamps and alarming-looking instruments called rasps. These are rather like lethal cheese graters and if you mistake your knuckles for the wood — well, the squeamish would be advised to look away. However, as Adam explains, the craft is perfectly safe if you abide by the rules — namely that fingers should always be kept behind the blade and away from the direction the gouge or rasp is working.

One young enthusiast embarking on his second 10-week course at the college is Richard Thomas. He was working on a tropical fish the day I visited. "I'd never tried wood-carving before," he said. "When I was at school woodwork seemed rather boring, because everything had to be measured and you had to make what you were told."

"The joy of this course is that you are totally free to work as you want. You become so involved with what you are doing that the conscious mind is completely switched off. Whatever you were worried about when you arrived is forgotten once you get down to work. And what you produce gives you real pride and pleasure."

Denise O'Riley, a ceramics and clay teacher, was working on a long wooden dish to hold party nibbles. She was enjoying making something practical, and

said that the pleasure of wood-carving is that it involves your hands and your head. "I really enjoy working with wood, but the mistakes are harder to cover up than when you work with clay."

Carmel Henry had spent the evening working an enormous lathe, rounding off the edges of a block of wood until they were smooth and even. After that she planned to make a pair of salad servers.

Christina Klassen had designed and made an ambitious kitchen cupboard, complete with shelves, a table flap and a carving of a cat. She had spent a total of 30 hours on the piece, and hoped it would be finished after another six.

Meanwhile, Cliff Pearcey, who works as an education media resources officer, was carving a sea-gull in relief against a sea background. One of Adam's long-standing pupils, he was using Canadian

Douglas fir. His work is so professional that he holds exhibitions and sells much of his work.

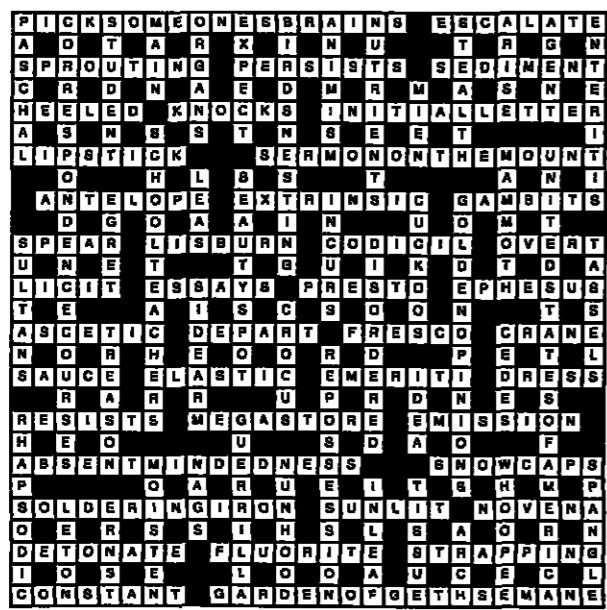
Some pupils like to use sweet-smelling cedar wood to carve ashtrays and dishes. Joan Smith, a teacher, was experimenting with mulberry wood and was carving a bowl shape out of a log, leaving half of the piece in its natural, rough-hewn state.

The four beginners on the course were each given a small duck, roughly cut from a large piece of wood, so they could begin to learn how to gouge the wood, rasp it and smooth the surface. Adam made his way round the class offering a word of advice here and there. Pupils can use the wood available in the college workshop or buy bits and pieces from Adam, who managed to stockpile some choice pieces after the great storm of 1987 felled so many trees.

Adam Ritchie also runs classes in furniture design at the Kensington and Chelsea College (0171-573 5333). His decorative wood course, 10 sessions of three hours each, costs £59-£71. Details of other wood-carving classes from local education authorities.

## GAMES AND JUMBO CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

### CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



### CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

Some entertaining miniatures from the Open Tournament at Dos Hermanas, Spain:

**Game one:** In this all-Spanish encounter, Black plays the opening horribly to fall badly behind in development. In the final position, his queen cannot defend both f6 and a8, and 20...Bd4 loses simply to 21.Rxd4.

**White:** J Mageron **Black:** J Palacios  
1 e4 c5 8 d5 Bxf3 15 d6 e6  
2 Nf3 Nc6 9 Qxf3 Ne5 16 Ndf5 Bxd6  
3 c3 d5 10 Bb5+ Nd7 17 Nxf6+ Bxf7  
4 exd5 Qxd5 11 0-0 a6 18 Bg5 Be7  
5 d4 cxd4 12 Bxd4 b5 19 Bxf6 Bxf6  
6 cxd4 Bg4 13 Bb3 Ng6 20 Rad1 resigns  
7 Nc3 Qd8 14 Re1 g6

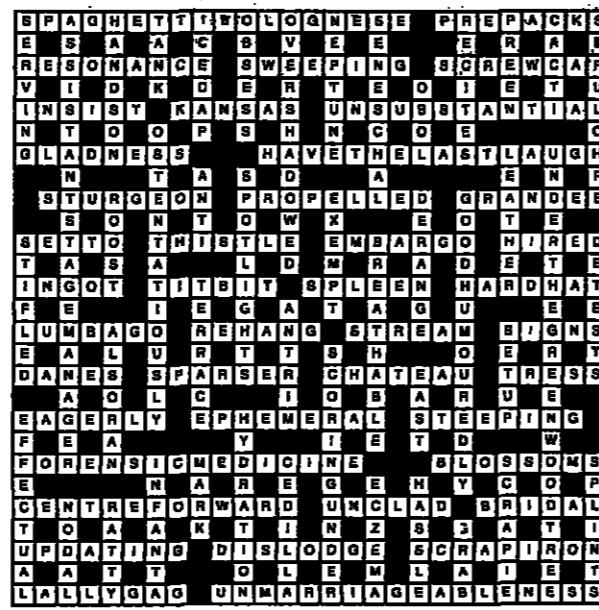
**Game two:** Black's passive play gave White the chance of a nice combination with 20.Rxh5! when 20...gxf5 21.Qxd5 f5 22.gxf6 Qf7 23.Bg6 is fatal for Black. After 21.Rh7+! Black still refused the bait, though he might as well have taken it: 21...Kxf7 22.Qh5+ Kg8 23.Qh6 24.exd5 Qxf7 25.Qxf7+ Kxf7 26.Rxd7+ is hopeless, but no worse than the game.

**White:** F Vallejo **Black:** J Castro  
1 e4 Nf6 9 c3 Nxe4 17 Ne5 Bxg5+  
2 e5 Nf5 10 Bxe4 Nf6 18 Bxg5 Ne5  
3 Nc3 e6 11 Bc2 0-0 19 dxe5 Qe7  
4 Nf3 d6 12 Bg5 Qd6 20 Rxf7 Kg7  
5 exd6 Bxd6 13 Qd3 g6 21 Rf7+ Kg8  
6 Ne4 Be7 14 0-0-0 Bd7 22 Rdi1 Bxg5+  
7 d4 Nd7 15 b4 Ng4 23 Kb1 resigns  
8 Bd3 Nf6 16 Qe2 h5

**Game three:** The Moroccan who went on to take first prize finds a neat combination to beat a Canadian former world title Candidate. At the end, 21...Nxe2 22.Nef6+ Bxf6 23.Nxf6+ Kh8 24.Nd5+ Kg8 25.Nxc7 wins a piece.

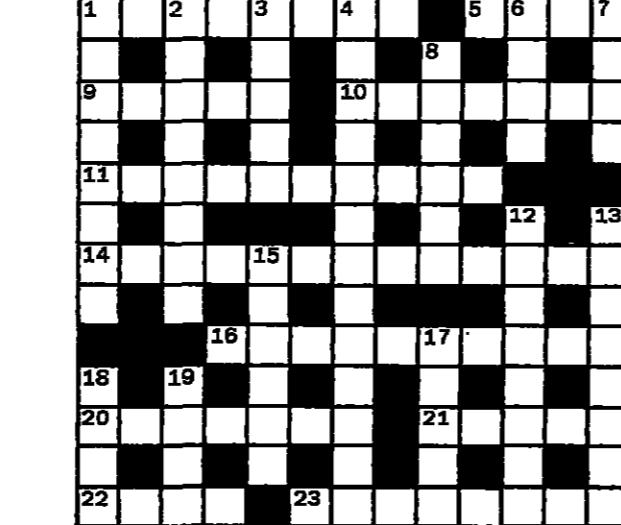
**White:** H Hamdouchi **Black:** K Spraggert  
1 e4 c5 8 c4 Be7 15 exd6 Bxd6  
2 Nf3 e6 9 Nc3 0-0 16 Nce4 Be7  
3 d4 cxd4 10 f4 Nbd7 17 b3 h6  
4 Nfd4 a6 11 Kh1 g6 18 Ne3 Bb7  
5 Bd3 Nf6 12 Nf3 b6 19 Bb2 Nh5  
6 0-0 Qc7 13 e5 Nh5 20 Ne5 Nxf4  
7 Qe2 d6 14 Ng5 Ng7 21 Nxd7 resigns

### CONCISE CROSSWORD



### CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3600 Saturday 2 May



**ACROSS**  
1 Adds sugar to (8)  
5 Period of time (4)  
9 Shape (5)  
10 Bright red (7)  
11 Excited pleasantly (10)  
14 Suprisest house (4)  
16 Villain (10)  
20 Hide (7)  
21 African capital (5)  
22 Daybreak (4)  
23 Instrument for injecting fluids (8)

**DOWN**  
1 On an unspecified occasion (8)  
2 Volcanic event (8)  
3 Characterised by cbb and flow (5)  
4 Westfully (13)  
6 Nocturnal birds (4)  
7 Speed (4)  
8 Bewail (6)  
12 Satisfying (8)  
13 Scholastic (8)  
15 Flowers (6)  
17 Fashion house (5)  
18 Corrosive chemical (4)  
19 Winter precipitation (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

**ACROSS:** 1 Whale, 4 Aid (Waylaid), 7 Pall, 8 Shrapnel, 9 Rear Admirals, 10 Crunch, 13 Effort, 15 Awe-inspiring, 19 Long jump, 20 Wasp, 21 Sir, 22 Layby, **DOWN:** 1 Weave, 2 Aleron, 3 Eased, 4 Alpha, 5 Dresser, 6 Praise, 11 Reasons, 12 Hang-up, 14 Faraway, 16 Eager, 17 Papal, 18 Nasty.

### BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

East-West game; dealer South	
North	♦AJ 10 3
	♦J 8 5
	♦8 6 5
	♦K 9 5
West	♦6 4 2
	♦4
	♦K 10 9 7 3 2
	♦A 8 2
South	♦K 7 5
	♦A K 10 9 7 3
	♦none
	♦Q 10 7 3

"I suppose, South said reflectively after this deal, "that if I get everything right, I can make 12 tricks." Seeing all four hands, that is an easy one, but your problem is to guess how he played to end with only eight tricks in his contract of Four Hearts.

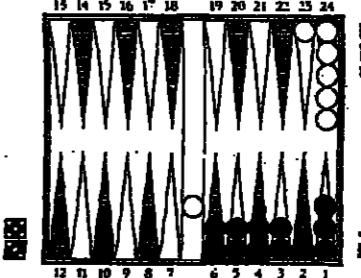
South opened One Heart and North (playing five-card majors) raised to Two Hearts. Hoping for a favourable lead if he did not reveal too much about his hand, South jumped to game. Mind you, if he had made any sort of try, North, with his maximum, would have accepted the invitation. All passed and Black's 2-point bid was 10 against Four Hearts.

Declarer ruffed, cashed his two top trumps (failing to drop the queen), and followed with a club to the king. Then came a spade to the king and a spade finesse. Thinking quickly, East ducked smoothly and, lulled into a false sense of security, declarer ill-advisedly came back to hand with a diamond ruff. Then he repeated the "marked" spade finesse and the roof fell in.

East won with his bare queen, cashed ♦Q and forced out declarer's last trump with another diamond lead. West, who had taken care to discard his ♦8 on his partner's ♦Q, was now in a position to claim the remaining tricks.

Many apologies for the misprinted hand which turned last Saturday's bridge into a high-level deduction puzzle. We have identified the cause of the misprint and hope to avoid such problems in future.

### BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Back to where we left off last week. It is double match point and Black has a 53 to play. How would you play it: (a) 6/1, 6/3 or (b) 5/off, 5/2?

The first important point here is that you at least see the possibility of playing 5/off, 5/2. Many players would automatically make the "forced" move 6/1, 6/3. How to evaluate such a position? The first thing is to look at the number of cross-overs (a cross-over moves a man from one quadrant of the board to the next or off the board). Here Black needs 11 cross-overs and White also needs 11 (four to bring his man on the bar to his home board and then seven to bear off). This means the position is close.

The other key factor is the blot on White's 2-point. If Black plays (b) and White enters with 22, 23, 24 or 25 hitting Black's blot then Black in turn will have the chance to hit White's blot, gaining significantly in the race. If White enters with 25 he should still hit the blot on Black's 2-point by playing Bar/23/18 rather than play Bar/20/18.

The other benefits to (b) are that it takes a man off and maintains the 6-point for another roll. Compare the positions if White rolls 6/2 after Black has made his play. In case (a) White is a big favourite, in (b) he is still on the bar. The downside of (b) is that White may hit and then Black may miss, in which case White becomes a very big favourite.

Over the board it is difficult to balance these factors but, as I have said before, when in doubt be aggressive. I chose play (b), my opponent stayed on the bar with a 6/3, but backgammon being backgammon I lost when he rolled 6/6 with his final shake of the dice. *Jellyfish* analysis shows that Black will win the game 71 per cent of the time after play (b) but only 67 per cent after (a).

## The mono pod

The taste of ... vanilla from Réunion.

Nikki Spencer samples sweet, spicy orchid riches

Vanilla originated in Mexico and was prized by the Aztecs, but it was on the small island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean, described as "France's best-kept secret" that it was first grown commercially. Until the 1840s, attempts to cultivate this rather plain-looking orchid in other climates failed. Then an African slave, Edmond Albius, discovered that you could pollinate the flowers by opening them up with a bamboo needle and pinching the stamen and pistil together - a technique still in use today.

The vanilla orchid attaches itself to trees, and the seeds are found in longish pods hanging from the plant. The complicated process of pollinating, growing and then curing this aromatic spice makes it one of the most expensive in the world. The orchid flowers only for a few hours. Women known as *marieuses* hand-pollinate up to 1,000 blooms a day. The pods take six weeks to reach full size, and another six to nine months to mature.

The green pods, which have none of the familiar vanilla flavour or fragrance, are then cured - a three-to-six-month process that begins with a 20-second boiling-water bath, followed by heating by the sun. They are then wrapped in blankets to sweat (which activates enzymes to create the rich aroma) and finally dried to a deep-brown or black colour.

The plants like moderate shade, not too much sun, and just the right amount of humidity. Vanilla is mainly grown on the east coast of the island

between Ste-Suzanne and St-Philippe. In the town of St André, just in from the coast, is La Maison de la Vanille, an old Creole mansion set amid lawns, gardens and plantations, where you can trace the history of this increasingly popular flavouring.

### Vanilla ventures

• La Maison de la Vanille, on the rue de la Gare in St André, Réunion, is open from Tuesday to Sunday, 9am-noon and 2-6pm.

• Réunion is a trekkers' paradise, and the Lonely Planet guide to Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles (£10.99) devotes an entire chapter to it.

Recommended is a two-day trek from the scorched summit of the volcano,

Piton de Fournaise, down to the sea

where a footpath takes you past

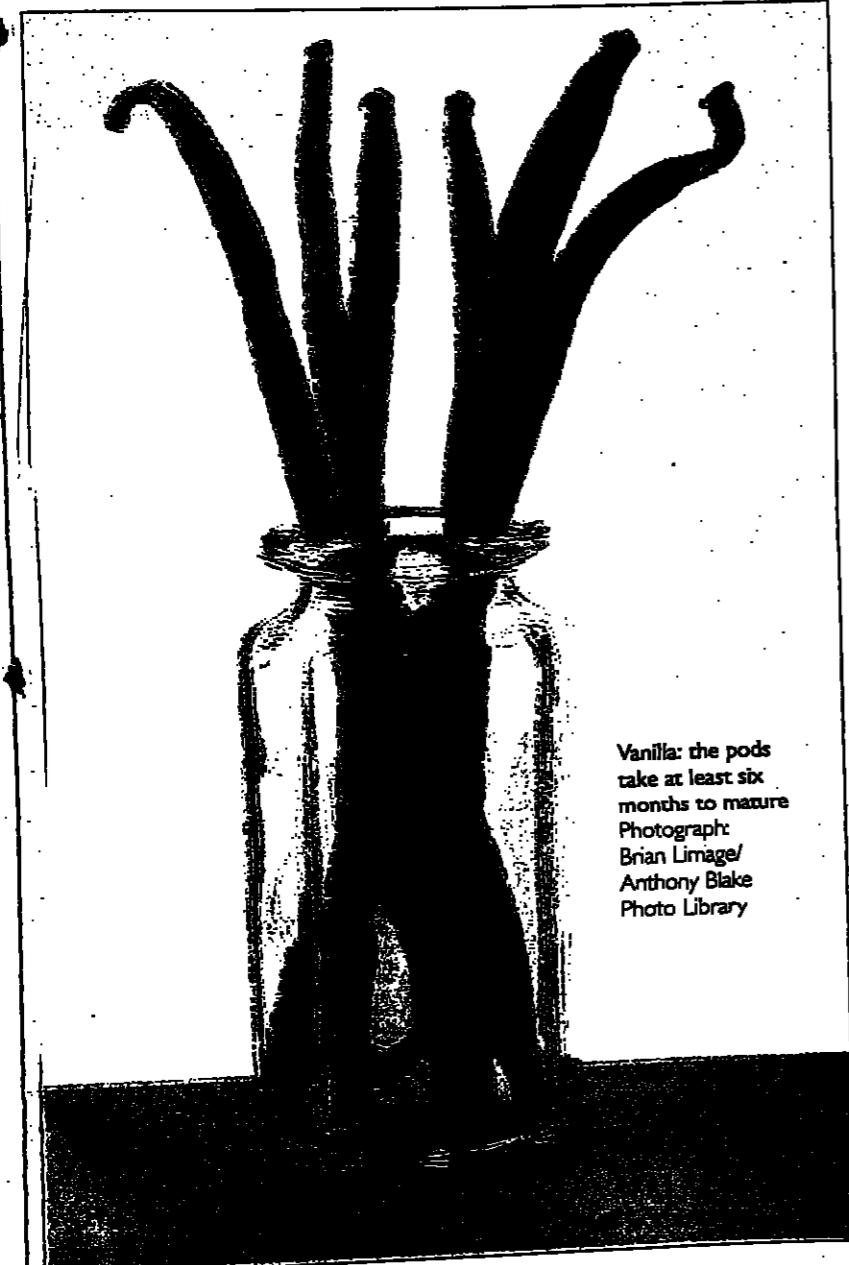
"vanilla plants lazily wrapping their

tendrils around filao trees".

• It is not that common to find vanilla from Réunion on sale in the UK.

Birgit Erath, who runs the Spice Shop at 1 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 (0171-221 4448) reckons that vanilla from Madagascar, 800km away, is every bit as good. She has vanilla from Mexico and vanilla pods in bottles of Bourbon - which she says is great for pouring into coffee.

• Most vanilla-flavoured food has never been near a vanilla pod - it is usually flavoured with vanilla substitutes. But Sainsbury's has just launched Organic Madagascan vanilla ice-cream (price £2.49 for 500ml, available from Monday).



Vanilla: the pods take at least six months to mature  
Photograph: Brian Limage/ Anthony Blake Photo Library



## Let there be light

Ever thought employing a lighting designer might improve an interior that needs that extra something? Claire Gervat talks to an ideas man

There was a time, not so long ago, when for most of us buying lights meant a trip to B&Q, and the main consideration was whether what you bought would illuminate all four corners of the room at the same time. But things have changed. We now expect our lights not only to make the room look good, but also to be objects of desire in their own right.

If the local shops don't throw up quite the perfect thing, there's no need to worry. Help is at hand in the form of Jack Wimperis, whose imaginative glass and metal constructions will turn the dullest interior into something remarkable. His current preoccupation is with outer space, and he draws inspiration from the comics and B-movies of the Fifties to create wall and floor lights that look like the flying saucers or rockets that Flash Gordon might have used.

That said, not all his previous pieces look as if they have just flown down to Earth, since he designs his lights very much with the idea of where they will be used. "I don't impose my will, but I do suggest what would fit with the architecture. I look at the room and explain what's possible. Generally, people don't know what can be done. So I'll take along my portfolio and we can look through it."

After that, Jack will do several drawings until the client is completely happy with the design. "It can be quite a slow process," he says, and he reckons to take an average of four to six weeks for each commission. Pricing depends on the size and complexity of the design; small lights cost from £60 to £400, but a large chandelier could cost thousands. If your purse strings are fairly tight, it's an easy matter to set a budget for Jack to work to.

Jack started as a stained-glass artist, serving his apprenticeship in Devon and from there moving to Ireland for two years. Here, he was asked to do some windows in a club. "They said, 'Oh, can you do any lighting for us?' So I did them a load of lights around the walls and some sculptural pieces, and that's where it all started. I do a lot of club work in England now, along with the private work. So I go in, do the stained-glass windows and tie in the lighting with it."

One of his recent jobs was for a club in Blackpool. "They had a metal-clad corridor, and we did about 10 lights down each side. They were all different space scenes, so as you walk down it looks as if you're walking down a connection corridor or something. From some of the portholes you were flying over the Earth, some over the moon, some over Mars. They were all backlit, so they were like stained-glass windows, but as lights. When people think of stained-glass they think of Tiffany lights, which is not what I do."

The lighting now takes up about half his time, leaving the other half for stained-glass. For that, too, he can be commissioned, with prices ranging from around £5 to £20 a square foot, depending on the design and materials. Much of this work is for front door panels, but Jack cites as one of his stranger jobs the transformation of a downstairs loo, which was given a big, stained-glass backlit window, a mirror with a light on either side and a metal loo seat. "That was a great commission," he says enthusiastically.

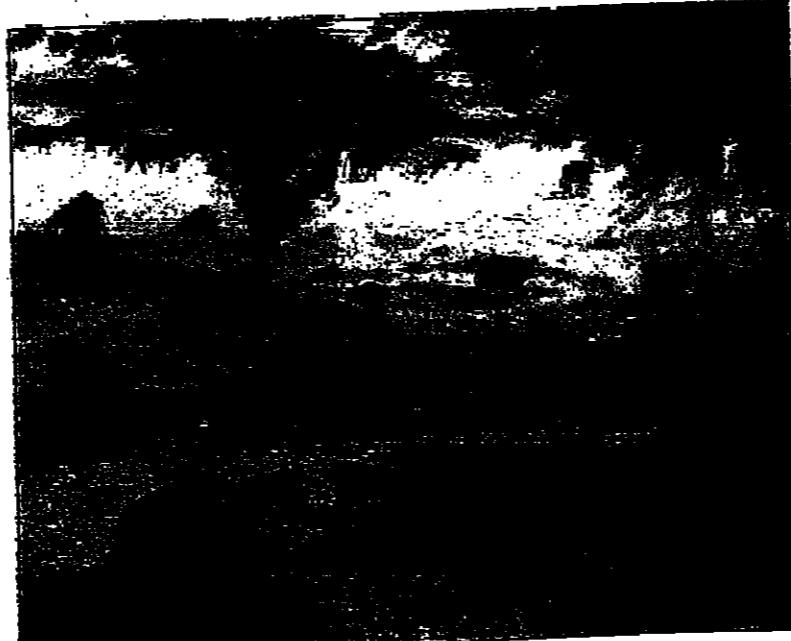
And should the thought of a red rocket-ship table-lamp sound appealing, you will be happy to know that Jack is intending to produce an entire line of them shortly.

Jack Wimperis can be contacted at Co-Optic Studios, 31 Westward Road, Cainscross, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4LA (01453 756944). More of his lighting work can be seen at the Chelsea Crafts Show and the 100% Design Show, which will be at Earls Court from 24 to 27 September.

## INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY TRAVEL

### I WANT TO BE A COWBOY

Riding the range in Spain  
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## Higgins unzipped and relieved his bladder before returning



MIKE  
ROWBOTTOM  
ON TALES OF  
SPORTSMEN  
BEHAVING  
BADLY

THE visuals at the start of BBC's *Match of The Day* offer a stylised version of the way disaffected managers are supposed to behave during half-time team talks.

Joe Kinnear, who has maintained Wimbledon as Premiership force in recent seasons, is seen banging his fist down on table, disturbing the composition of a nearly empty cup of tea.

In reality, if reports floating back from the other side of the dressing-room door are to be credited, Kinnear and others who share his volatile disposition favour more extreme measures. Crocker takes flight. The tea urn gets tipped over.

Bruce Rioch, the former Arsenal and Millwall manager, has a reputation of being one

of the strictest disciplinarians.

His man-management style appears to have developed naturally from his playing days, when – the story goes – he took out his frustration on an apprentice who had failed to clean his boots properly by slapping the wretched lad against a wall and using him for shooting practice.

Rioch's left foot, in its day, could have doubled for a steamhammer. I bet that improved the shins on his Adidas 2000's.

Of course we like to hear stories of sporting gestures. Gazza handing over his Littlewoods Cup medal to a non-playing substitute who, unlike himself, appeared for Middlesbrough in the Weltklasse meeting. Dennis Mitchell of the United States and Olapade Adenike of Nigeria became involved in a disagreement which came to blows.

Having Badly – these we love. Gazza launching himself into the stupifyingly stupid challenge during the 1991 FA Cup final that caused him career-threatening injury. Gazza enraged the Celtic fans by pretending to be a pugilist player on a Protestant apprentices' boys' march. Such incidents stir the blood.

On that subject, a frisson went through the world of athletics a couple of seasons ago when the rivalry of the international sprinting scene spilled over from the track into the lobby of the Nova Park Hotel in Zurich.

After racing over 100 metres in the Weltklasse meeting, Dennis Mitchell of the United States and Olapade Adenike of Nigeria became involved in a disagreement which came to blows.

The cause of the argument was never made entirely clear. Some said it was over a woman. Some said one runner had insulted the other's mother. Whatever, the tangible evidence of their dispute remained to be spouted off the hotel carpet.

Athletics, like any other sport, has a history of misdemeanours. At the 1904 Olympics in St Louis, a New Yorker called Fred Lorz crossed the line first in the marathon, had been photographed with Alice Roosevelt, daughter of the US president, and was about to be awarded the gold medal when it was discovered that he had covered 11 miles of his journey in a car.

Lorz passed it off as a practical joke, but his national federation failed to see the funny side and banned him for life. Personally, I have never experienced a sportsman so breathtakingly out-of-order as Alex Higgins. Eight years ago I watched him play Dennis Taylor in the final of the Irish Benson & Hedges snooker tournament – held in the sales ring at Goffs, Co Kildare, where bloodstock auctions regularly took place.

The event was heavy with foreboding. The previous weekend, while both men were representing Northern Ireland in the World Cup, they had had a bitter row during which Higgins – a Protestant – was widely reported to have threatened to have his Catholic colleague shot.

By 1990, Higgins' high-point – the tearful world title win of 1982 – was a diminishing mem-

ory. The Hurricane was blowing itself out before everyone's eyes.

Higgins showed touches of the old, glorious certainty in the early stages, punctuating his heavy breaks with tipsy-toe visits back to his seat for a drag or a slug of beer. A score of 54 was marked by a disco wiggle, with cue held high overhead.

But as play progressed, Higgins deteriorated. While Taylor strode off between frames to compose himself, his opponent remained at table-side, chattering to spectators and downing what looked like his favourite tipple of vodka and orange.

Towards the end of the match I had left my seat and was talking to an official backstage in the yard where horses were held before entering the auction

ring. Sensibly, the stone floor was provided with gutters and drains to deal with the products of any nervousness among the assembled creatures.

As I spoke, I noticed a thin-waisted-coated figure coming out of one of the drains, unzipped his trousers and relieved his bladder before returning – with a faint smile – to the spectators and television cameras no more than 20 yards away. Higgins's watering hole.

Earlier in the evening, Higgins had attempted to quell the noise of his more vocal supporters. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said. "This is the Irish Benson & Hedges. Can we have a little bit of decorum?" He meant it, too.

## WRU loyalty threat to clubs

By Chris Hewett

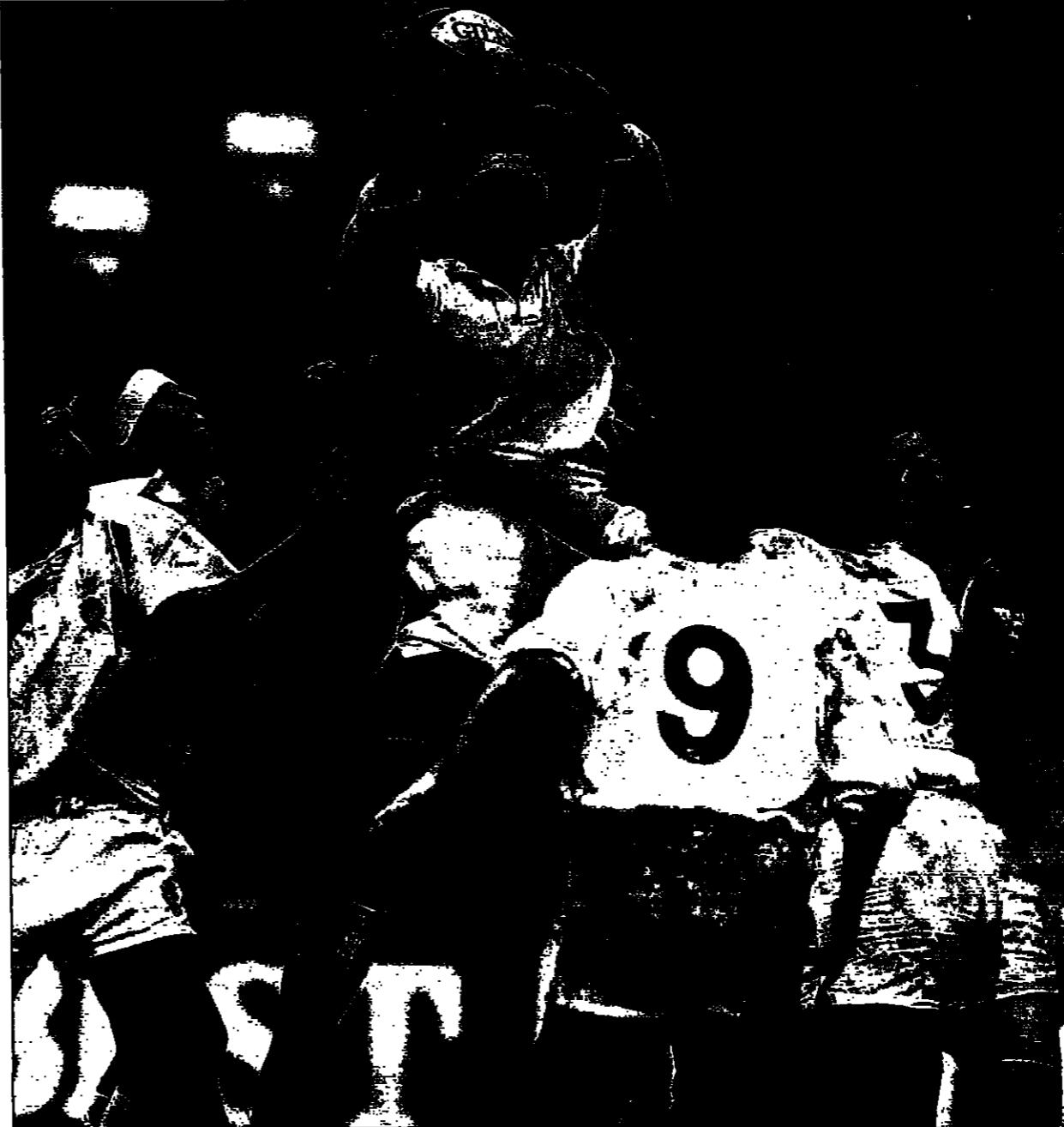
THIS week's heavy-handed assault on England's Premiership clubs by Vernon Pugh, the chairman of the International Rugby Board, was put in ironic perspective yesterday as the full extent of the internal squabbles in Wales finally became clear. Pugh, a former chairman of the Welsh Rugby Union, was given a timely reminder that the state of the game in his homeland remains more anarchic than anything currently happening on the other side of the Severn Bridge.

Whilst Rugby Football Union officials were announcing the completion of positive peace talks with the Allied Dunbar clubs, details of which will be revealed after next Friday's management board meeting at Twickenham, the WRU has threatened to throw seven teams out of the eight-club Welsh Premiership unless they sign 10-year loyalty agreements.

Bizarrely, the one club at under threat of expulsion is Cardiff, who have been at loggerheads with the union for months and are in the process of hauling the WRU before the High Court. "I hope we can reach agreement with Cardiff without having to take that step but, whatever, they will be eligible to play in next season's Premiership until November, when the court hearing is scheduled," said Glamorgan Griffith, the WRU chairman. "We would also have to nominate them for next season's European Cup should they finish in the top four of the league this time."

The remaining seven clubs will attend a general meeting in Port Talbot on 17 May, where WRU officials will insist they sign as a condition of entry into next season's Premiership. "I fully expect them to sign," said Griffiths, who confirmed that a seasonal hand-out of £500,000 per club was on the table.

To make matters worse, Kevin Bovring, the national coach, is still not sure of his future, even though Wales are scheduled to depart for a tour of South Africa this month. Terry Cobner, the director of rugby, would acknowledge only that his recommendation to the WRU had been delayed.



Leaps and bounds: Gill Burns (centre) believes England have improved since the last World Cup. Photograph: Empics

## Burns sets tone as a Corinthian with attitude

GILL BURNS transports herself around the country in a car precisely 180,000 miles old and has not taken a holiday in almost seven years. If she spends little or none of her precious time worrying about money, it is because she has no money to worry about. "Disposable income? That's a laugh," she says. "You make sacrifices to play this game and the first sacrifice is whatever you might have in your pocket."

Her game is rugby and, without putting too fine a point on it, she is an extraordinarily accomplished performer; a fact she intends to emphasise over the two weeks of the third Women's World Cup, which began in Amsterdam yesterday. England are reigning champions and Burns, a No 8 from the Waterloo club, is captain of her country and the proud owner of 40 international caps, one more than Janis Ross, a flanker with Saracens and her oldest international ally.

She is also the only player to have scored in both previous World Cup finals and when you consider her physical resilience, her longevity at international level and a catalogue of complementary sporting achievements – Burns represented British Universities at hockey, basketball, swimming and athletics – she emerges as an explosive mix of Sean Fitzpatrick and C B Fry. A Corinthian with attitude. Indeed, the most striking

aspect of the 26-strong England squad who begin their campaign against Sweden today is the bewildering breadth of their sporting excellence. Paula George, for example, is a world champion netball player as well as an attacking full-back; Pip Spivey, the Clifton wing, is a nationally ranked pentathlete, tetrathlete and indoor rower; Teresa O'Reilly, a prop forward with Saracens, was a junior discus and javelin champion before moving into martial arts, where she won British and European titles in karate. Think twice before you take liberties with her. Os du Randt.

Thanks largely to a £146,000 grant from the Sports Lottery Fund, this England party will be more thoroughly prepared for the rigours of international competition than any of their predecessors. "We've just spent the most fabulous week at Lille, which gave us quality time together," said Burns. "Back in the early days, we'd have to get someone to pick our shirts up from some motorway service station an hour before kick-off. I could never have imagined a situation in which an England squad could spend 24 hours a day thinking purely about rugby. That's how far we've come."

Socking it to a predictably tough and resourceful New Zealand side, who are said to meet the holders at the semi-final stage, will be easier said than done. "We played them over there last year and had our backsides kicked," admitted Burns, none too sweetly. "We're naive, we defended poorly and we paid through the teeth. But we're a different

side now, both in terms of personnel and attitude, and even though the New Zealand girls have been writing us off in public, I'm confident in our ability to handle whatever they throw at us."

"We've taken big strides off the field and those have been

accompanied by improvements on it. We've always trained and trained damned hard, but we weren't necessarily doing the right training. Now we have balanced player-specific programmes, expertly compiled and rigidly adhered to. We're serious about this."

According to Byford, a front-row partner of O'Reilly at Saracens, many leading male players discovered the seriousness of it all some time ago, especially their counterparts at Saracens. "We get a tremendous amount of moral and practical support from guys like Tony Dirose and Richard Hill," she said. "And when François Pienaar first took over as Sarries coach, he encouraged us by saying: 'This club needs silverware and you're the people to win us some.' If he recognises the work we're putting in, we must be doing something right."

Wasps' tinkering should not affect the poignancy of the proceedings, however. Richmond are 99 per cent certain to up sticks next season, either to Reading's new football stadium or along the road to the The Stoop, so those who brave the spartan surroundings of the Athletic Ground this afternoon will sample an experience increasingly common in the ever-changing landscape of English rugby. The end of an era.

## Title-chasing Saracens extend high-risk strategy

By Chris Hewett

SARACENS have lived so close to the edge over the last fortnight that one more piece of calculated brinkmanship should not make much difference either. The Premiership leaders will take on a rejuvenated London Irish outfit at Watford tomorrow without four of their acknowledged "big six" – only Tony Dirose and Philippe Sella remain of the most cultured

and Alex Bennett leave a lasting impression on the Exiles.

Tomorrow's game has come a day early for Michael Lynagh, who has not played since dropping the most memorable goal of a great career against Newcastle just under a fortnight ago.

The former Wallaby captain had a benign growth removed from his groin early last week and although he had originally planned to face the Irish, the Saracens selectors were more

concerned with ensuring his participation in next weekend's Tetley's Bitter Cup final. "The stitches are out, but there is still some bruising," said Mike Scott, the team manager. "It's sensible to take the safe option."

François Pienaar, the player-coach, is also hoping in on a cup final comeback after twanging a hamstring during the Newcastle match. "François is still in South Africa after attending the funeral of Kitch Christie, but

he came through an eight-kilometre run on Thursday with no ill effects," Scott revealed.

The major worry concerns Kyran Bracken. The England and Lions scrum-half spends more time on the treatment table than most players spend in bed – he lasted only 40 minutes at The Stoop on Wednesday after missing the trip to Leicester four days previously.

Saracens' cup final opponents are also keeping their

most potent powder dry for the big occasion. Wasps rest eight first-choice for the London derby at Richmond; Lawrence Dallaglio, Simon Shaw, Mark Webdon and the entire front row will be missing from the pack, while Mike Friday and Alex King stand down from the half-back positions. Jon Upton makes his first start at full-back since August while Adam Black comes in at loose-head prop for Darren Molloy.

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## A parade of ineptitude from a tawdry collection of rejects and no-hoppers



CHRIS  
MAUME  
SPORT  
ON TV

ONLY one man could induce me to watch more than one frame of snooker at a time, and that's Jimmy White, a welcome reminder of the sport's louche bedrock and the greatest player never to... (you know the rest).

I don't know what kind of lifestyle he leads, but somebody should have a word. He looks so unhealthy. His eyes were washed out, his skin blotchy, and he seemed to go further downhill with each error. Every wasted opportunity opened the door to a whirlwind, and after a token White fightback, O'Sullivan blew him away.

"Jim's been playing the best snooker of anybody up to the quarter-finals, and it doesn't get any easier," O'Sullivan said before the match. He was wrong. Now you'll have to pardon my ignorance – maybe they're both like this all the time – but the physical evidence told you right from the opening frame who was going to win.

O'Sullivan strutted round the table with a macho little hip swivel, a tiny swagger of unbreathable confidence. White, meanwhile, looked like a man with a hangover (maybe he was a man with a hangover).

I don't know what kind of lifestyle he leads, but somebody should have a word. He looks so unhealthy. His eyes were washed out, his skin blotchy, and he seemed to go further downhill with each error. Every wasted opportunity opened the door to a whirlwind, and after a token White fightback, O'Sullivan blew him away.

The difference between O'Sullivan & White, and between your average pub players, is that the latter will proceed by incompetence: misses, not pots,

down of the season, the TD pass going to a receiver marked so badly he must have felt like the Saharan tree that was in the Guinness Book of Records peddled by NFL Europe (which used to be known as the World League of American Football).

One of the dubious pleasures of a brief sojourn in the Highlands this week was watching "Tubuchdown Scotland" (Grampian, Scottish), which featured a meeting between the England Monarchs and Scottish Claymores in what appeared to be somebody's back garden in Birmingham.

The half hour was a vibrant parade of ineptitude, all third-and-ten, sad sacks and frantic fumbles. Thanks to the Monarchs' defense containing more holes than Blackburn, Lancashire, the Claymores did at least score their first touch-

down of the season, the TD pass going to a receiver marked so badly he must have felt like the Saharan tree that was in the Guinness Book of Records peddled by NFL Europe (which used to be known as the World League of American Football).

Passes went straight to the opposition, who promptly dropped them; running backs were so much tackled as ushered politely into touch like Wimbledon champions being led gently by the arm around Centre Court with their trophy. Defenders would get their fingers to tentative field goal attempts without quite managing to impede their progress. Not that it mattered too much: one attempt skewed to the left and ended up in Telford.

A few years ago I had the misfortune to witness the then London Monarchs at Wembley in a match chiefly memorable for the number of punts (they didn't even do that very well)

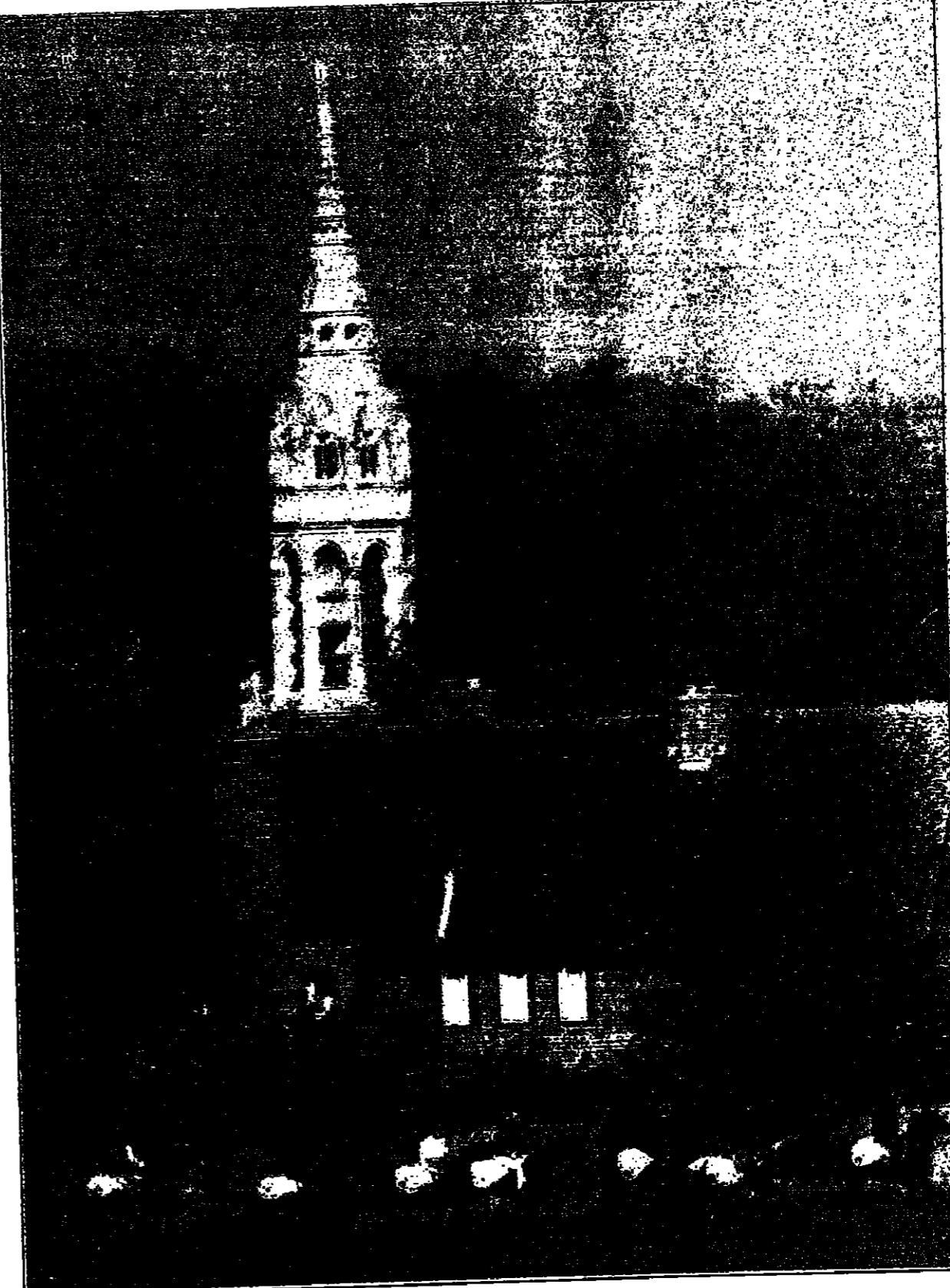
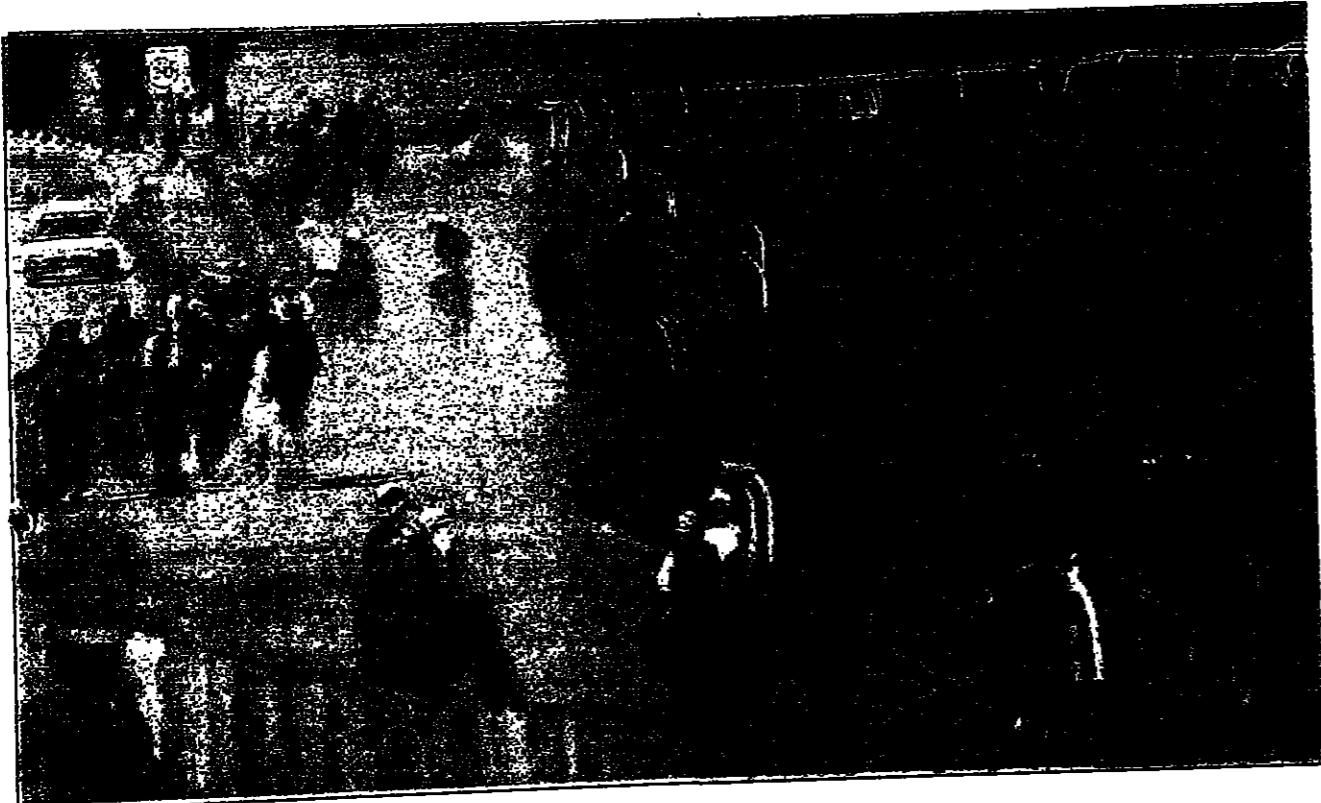
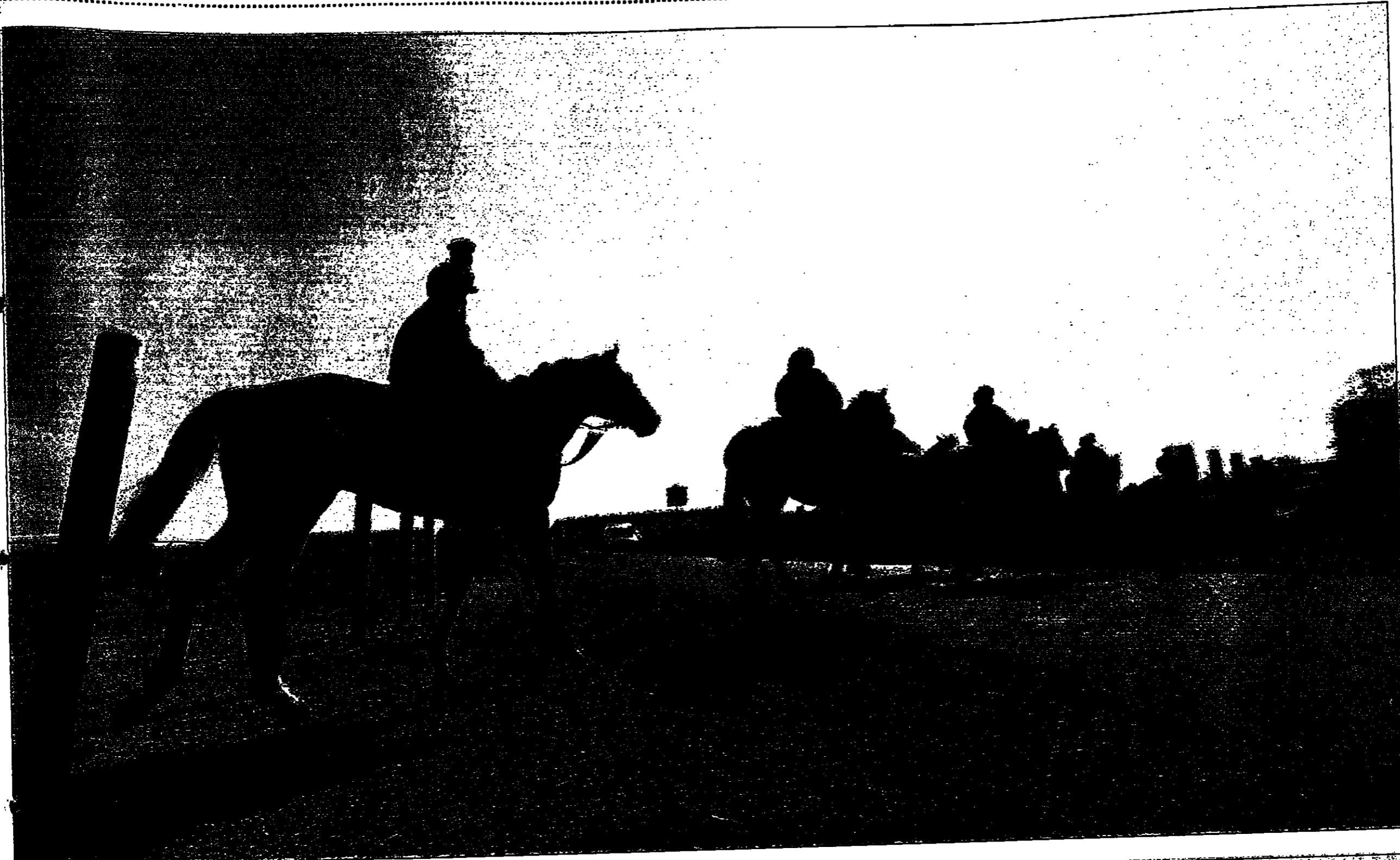
and the puppyish attempt at emulating the razzmatazz of the NFL. The principal benefit accrued from the day was the exercise involved in doing the Mexican wave that engulfed the stadium for the rest of the match after the first couple of bad, risible drives made it clear we were watching rubbish.

If "Touchdown Scotland" is anything to go by, that was Super Bowl stuff compared to the present farce. I almost found myself doing a one-man Mexican wave just toiven things up a bit. How much longer will the NFL continue to underwrite this tawdry collection of rejects and no-hoppers?

I'm only just getting round to mentioning *Planet Football* (C4), for which apologies to a mostly absorbing and intelligent series. This week Simon O'Brien and Steve Cram fetched up in Denmark and Norway with their usual recipe of history, fasci-

### QUOTES OF THE WEEK

- I felt for him. There was no joy inside in that final frame. I was a bit sick for him. Ronnie O'Sullivan, suffers for being the man to beat Jimmy White at the World Snooker Championships.
- He's a terrific defender who is quick and can pass the ball. Alex Ferguson explains what convinced him that Manchester United should pay a world record fee for a defender of £10m for Dutchman Jaap Stam.
- The alcohol level was so high you could not survive with that concentration. Prince Alexandre de Merode, head of the Olympic medical commission comments on Michelle De Bruin's drug test sample.
- I'm innocent of these charges. De Bruin opens her defence.



## Newmarket prepares for its big weekend

NEWMARKET is always a bustling place during the Flat horse racing season but there has been a special air about the town this week. Just as the leafy suburbs of Wimbledon come to life in June in readiness for south-west London's fortnight-long festival of tennis, so Newmarket awaits its big weekend with eager anticipation.

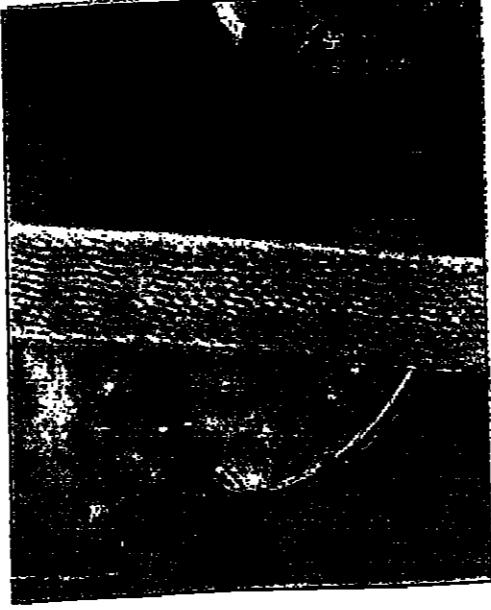
The home of racing plays host today and tomorrow to the 2,000 and 1,000 Guineas, the year's first major highlights for the cream of this season's three-year-old crop. Today's 2,000 Guineas in particular holds the promise of the emergence of a true equine superstar. There are high hopes that Xaar, the odds-on favourite, will prove himself to be one of the best three-year-olds for many years.

In Newmarket this week the weather has been a major topic of conversation. With all the recent rain the going is likely to be soft. There were six withdrawals yesterday from the 2,000 Guineas and they could be joined by the Roger Charlton-trained Tamarisk if there is no marked improvement in the going this morning. At the moment there are 18 runners in the race.

Four horses were withdrawn yesterday from the field for tomorrow's 1,000 Guineas, leaving 16 runners to contest the fillies' Classic.

● Copies of these photographs – and any others by The Independent's sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam – can be ordered by telephoning 0171-293-2534.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ASHDOWN



Like every other yard in Newmarket, Giles Bravery's stable has been a hive of activity this week. One of the most important jobs is that of the farrier (pictured left and second from left), who ensures that all the horses are properly shod



If anyone in Newmarket was in need of inspiration this week they might have visited the town's museum, where portraits of the legendary Godolphin and jockey Lester Piggott are on display





# Xaar the Slayer to strike fear into 2,000 rivals

By Richard Edmondson

IT HAD seemed that the odds-on favourite for the 2,000 Guineas had become a figure of near gothic intimidation. Xaar the Unconquerable or Xaar the Slayer were appropriate epithets for a colt whose potency was growing by the moment.

Yet it now appears that opposing trainers consider the French horse to be no more intimidating than a basketful of kittens. A total of 18 animals have been declared for the season's opening Classic today. In recent years the only occasion when the Guineas field has numbered more than 20 was when Mister Baileys beat 22 rivals in 1994. Among this cavalry are seven horses who have

already been sent scurrying into their ratholes by Xaar.

They re-emerge from the skirmish now to take on a big cat who apparently has more weaknesses than most of us have thus far detected.

Tamarisk is just about the best of those that Xaar has vanquished, but he will not rejoin the joust today if the going becomes unsatisfactory. "I have declared Tamarisk, but if there is deterioration in the ground, then his participation would be in doubt," Roger Charlton, the colt's trainer, said yesterday.

The track is, in fact, in remarkable nick considering Newmarket has just suffered its wettest April on record. Sometimes that icy hurricane that lances over the East Anglian

flatlands has its uses. The going is expected to be good to soft.

This then should be adequate terrain for Xaar, who has five victories and an avenged second place in the form book. Among that record are two successful visits to Headquarters so his aptitude for travelling and the Rowley Mile's undulations is undisputed.

The pernicious will question both the form and manner of Xaar's most recent effort, in the Craven Stakes. Circus the third that day, went on to produce a Charlie Caroll of an effort at Sandown in the Classic Trial. In addition, Xaar had needed time to his aptitude for travelling and the Rowley Mile's undulations is undisputed.

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This is the colt's great idio-

synsary. Xaar appears to nod off in a race and then wake with the sort of start which suggests the bedside candle has fallen into his lap. It is rather endearing to see him struggling along before making his undoubted class tell.

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: Xaar  
(Newmarket 3.40)  
NB: Cretan Gift  
(Newmarket 4.15)

Xaar's main rival, according to the markets, is another traveller with just one blemish to his name, King Of Kings. The Irish colt is never more impressive than when he is being described by his trainer, Aidan O'Brien, and if this race was run on the

Ballydoyle gallops, King Of Kings could probably win wearing leg-irons.

Nevertheless, he has never been entirely convincing on the racecourse, where there has been the suspicion that he was being saved for another day. That time has come and King Of Kings may be in for a shock. O'Brien has said this week that his colt will be getting the full treatment from the saddle. As Michael Kinane is the man who is going to be administering the encouragement, today is probably not the occasion to be King Of Kings.

Godolphin's caravan arrives in Britain for a fifth year with Central Park carrying the Royal blue ensign into Guineas bat-

ter. It would be easier to like his prospects had his camp not given the impression of playing "one potato, two potato" before finalising their running plans.

More tempting is Lend A Hand, who has almost certainly surprised his trainer. Mark Johnston ran the colt in a median auction maiden at Catterick last year after starting him off in a similar race at Ayr. By the time of his final start, Lend A Hand had worked his way up to Group One company and he enjoyed the forum, slaughtering his rivals in the Grand Criterium at San Siro. That form gives him another well-subscribed race, but this is a contest which rarely passes without telling French intervention. Loving

good vibes as Mister Baileys, who won this in 1994, but better ones than Bijou D'Inde, who was third to Mark Of Esteem two years later. That, and other more pertinent factors, suggest Lend A Hand will be second. All the indicators point to the one horse that should precede him. Let us hope it is Xaar (nap 3.40) the Magnificent we see today.

Tomorrow's 1,000 Guineas features a bouncy castle for the youngsters and, Clive Brittan hopes, a similar fitness assessment about his representative in the fillies' Classic. Cloud Castle is a good each-way shot in another well-subscribed race, but this is a contest which rarely passes without telling French intervention. Loving

Claim (3.45), the Prix Marcel Boussac winner, can complete the Gallic pillage.

In America, it's the time of the year to buy your bourbon shares as Louisville comes alive to the sound of disappearing mint juleps. The Kentucky Derby, the nation's most celebrated horse race, may again be collected by the trainer and jockey team of Bob Baffert and Gary Stevens. They won 12 months ago with Silver Charm and are at least as confident again with Indian Charlie.

There is a chance also for last season's horse of the year, Favorite Trick. He used to be trained by the East End-born Pat Byrne, which may be as near a connection as Britain gets to big-race victory this weekend.

## Peslier the man with power-steering job

THIS afternoon's French raider has outstanding ability, as well as ears, and is expected once again to show his class at Newmarket.

Olivier Peslier, Xaar's rider, has made progress like few others of his profession in recent years and can now be considered in the pan-global class of Frankie Dettori and Michael Kinane (the two jockeys he admires most). Peslier is even accepted in Britain, inside whose shores French jockeys have been raising titters for longer than the *Carry On* movies.

Peslier is, if you like, the new Yves St Martin, a darling of the Parisian circuit who has shown that the produce is just as sweet when he travels overseas. The stonemason's son can count on the support of owners such as Khalid Abdullah and Daniel Wildenstein in his homeland, which necessarily gives him a conduit into the mighty squad prepared by André Fabre. Life is bliss.

But, like his namesake, Olivier wants more. He especially has his sights trained on

The favourite's laziness will be outweighed by his rider's drive. Richard Edmondson reports

a little contest we run here near a fairfair. "I will come many times to England for the big races because I have had such good success there," he said this week. "I will come whenever my schedule lets me. I want to win more big races. Most of all I want to win the Epsom Derby."

If he is to win a Blue Riband next month, the great likelihood is that Peslier will do it aboard his mount in this afternoon's 2,000 Guineas, Xaar. For those who study pedigrees, success for Xaar is considered slightly on the improbable side of impossible. They point to the fact that Xaar's sire, Zafonic, was so intractable that it came as something of a surprise that he did not slow down by having a parachute unfurled from the back of his saddle.

This, however, ignores the differences between father and son. Xaar is such a sonnenolent creature that it seems if he ever fails a drugs test it will be

not so good. I would prefer good.

"I'm very much looking forward to the race because I'm riding a good horse. I'm just disappointed that Second Empire is not there or the horse that finished second to me last time [Gulland] so we can see Xaar as a true champion."

Peslier is certainly proving himself as a champion across the racing map. This winter he was waving his whip in Japan, where he enjoyed a working holiday (they race just at weekends). Unlike the rest of us, he returns from vacation with considerably more loot than when he started.

During his three months in the Land Of The Rising Sun, from the beginning of the year, Peslier rode 27 winners from 125 rides, including four Grade 1s. By the time it was time to stuff all the yen in the suitcase and return to his Chantilly home, Peslier was the leading jockey. By the time I knew he was going to run as a four-year-old because I thought he would win everything again." He won't now, but his jockey might.

noticed that the Frenchman does not appear the most aggressive of pilots. He has the neat seat that all his countrymen possess, a streamlined technique that does not seem compromised by his Prince Charles ears. Yet there is also power there, as anyone who saw Xaar being roisted along in the Craven will testify. Peslier's appearance that beautiful blend of British and Irish force coupled with American and French style.

It would have been a sight to have relished aboard a horse to match Peslier's talents this season, but now Peintre Celebre is to entertain mares rather than turfistes following a tendon injury. "That was bad news because he was a very good horse, a champion," Peslier said of his staggering Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe winner. "It's not like he was Limmiatarr and retired to stud after the Classics. I was so very happy when I knew he was going to run as a four-year-old because I thought he would win everything again." He won't now, but his jockey might.



Olivier Peslier: Stylish and streamlined, except for his ears

Photograph: Peter Jay

## Xaar sharp enough to confirm status

Simon Holt (right) of the Channel 4 Racing team gives a runner-by-runner analysis of today's 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket.

Almutawakel: Won his first two races well but had his limitations exposed when fifth in the Royal Lodge Stakes.

Arkadian Hero: Despite winning Mill Reef Stakes on good to soft going, might have preferred a faster surface when fourth on his return. Stamina over a mile unproven.

Border Arrow: Relished stiff finish in two course victories, including Feildens Stakes last month. May prove best at middle distances but can pick a few off in the final furlong. Central Park: Looked smart last season but flopped behind Xaar in the Dewshurst. That run is probably best forgotten and he is no forlorn hope.

Daggers Drawn: Justified a tall reputation at Goodwood and Doncaster last season but has twice been well beaten by Xaar subsequently.

Duck Row: Made a deep impression when winning at Newbury (1m, soft) only to disappoint inexplicably in the Harris Hill Stakes.

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Arkadian Hero: Despite winning Mill Reef Stakes on good to soft going, might have preferred a faster surface when fourth on his return. Stamina over a mile unproven.

Border Arrow: Relished stiff finish in two course victories, including Feildens Stakes last month. May prove best at middle distances but can pick a few off in the final furlong. Central Park: Looked smart last season but flopped behind Xaar in the Dewshurst. That run is probably best forgotten and he is no forlorn hope.

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Border Arrow: Rel

**Cricket:** Alec Stewart has the image, but his rival in the captaincy race has the imagination, says **Derek Pringle**

## Hussain the leader to excite England



Nasser Hussain: Prepared to experiment and to gamble

Photograph: Allsport

**Test of character:**  
how the two  
candidates fare in  
the ratings game

**Hussain:** Aggressive, tac-  
tical, astute and bold. Me-  
diately in the moment.

**Stewart:** Sound, well-re-  
spected old pro from "up  
and at 'em" school of cap-  
taincy. Experienced.

**Minuses**

**Hussain:** Volatile and un-  
predictable. Inexperience  
as captain.

**Stewart:** Squeaky-clean  
image, no deeper than the  
crease in his whites. Staid  
thinker. Tolerates media  
(just).

**MacLaurin factor:**  
(smart, shaved, smiling)

**Hussain:** Suspect, though  
is intelligent enough to bite  
his tongue and remove  
favourite baseball cap.

**Stewart:** Top-notch. Will  
keep sponsors happy unless  
products conflict with  
those he is already endor-  
sing.

**Street cred**

**Hussain:** Likes baseball  
caps and has pointy side-  
burns.

**Stewart:** Only with those  
like the clean lines of  
"Thunderbirds" puppets.



Alec Stewart: Has added flexibility to experience

Photograph: Daily Mirror

IT HAS been described as the most onerous job in British sport, though Graham Taylor might have contested that particular claim during his time in charge of the nation's football side. But if the hours are long, the pay modest and the frustration quotient high, it seems there are still people willing to captain England's Test team and next Tuesday will see Michael Atherton's successor named at Lord's.

According to David Graveney, the chairman of selectors, there are only two candidates: Surrey's Alec Stewart and the Essex and England vice-captain, Nasser Hussain. Unsurprisingly, most opinion favours Stewart, but that is mainly because English cricket has a habit of taking the safe option and consoling the present, rather than risking uncertainty and addressing the future.

Where the Surrey man perhaps scores highest is in the style over content category, a quality that Lord MacLaurin, the chairman of the English Cricket Board, writing on the matter last week, appears to place above all others. Neat and freshly peeled at all times, Stewart comes closest to conforming to the image of a captain as MacLaurin the cricket fan remembers them from the past.

The reality is somewhat different and as most opponents from around the world will vouch, Stewart's pristine image stops at his spotless whites. This, however, is not a criticism. Modern sport is tough and even tougher for England's cricketers who are still saddled with being the torchbearers of some outmoded moral code.

It is an area where Hussain clearly lags behind and MacLaurin's stated dislike of

stubble, baseball caps and gum chewing, while primarily a thinly veiled snipe at Atherton, can also be applied to Hussain. Perhaps it is fortunate for the Essex man, that the chairman has only the right to veto the captain chosen, rather than appoint him.

Yet in the same breath, MacLaurin admits that cricket needs to attract more young people, something Hussain's dashing cool would surely do.

At the business, rather than the PR end of the job, i.e. what happens on the field, the differences between the two candidates are even more pronounced. If Stewart has the image, it is Hussain who has the imagination.

Being damned with faint

praise is not Hussain's style, which is both imaginative and bold. But while some believe him to be selfish - batting has always been a fairly selfish pursuit - others, notably Keith Fletcher, believe he reads situations on the field better and quicker than most.

"Nasser is very aware as a captain," says Fletcher. "He is less inclined to do the obvious. Of course there is nothing wrong with the obvious providing you've got a couple of world-class strike bowlers, but England have not. He's prepared to try things and gamble a little, which is what you have to do with a bowling attack like England's. He also talks well to both players and press."

Inevitably, both players have their pros and cons and Graveney and his fellow selectors, Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, will no doubt have

chewed them over a 100 times. However, by far the most important factor if England are to play a five-man bowling attack, is Stewart's value as a batsman who keeps wicket.

When batting, Stewart is at his best when the ball is bouncing above the knee roll of his pads. Ideally then, he needs to bat in the top three. Against South Africa, and Australia later in the year, he needs to bat at his best and keep wicket almost as well.

Burdening him with the captaincy on top of this vital all-round role would be asking too much and undoubtedly over-player that he is, it invites the sort of compromise that one former England captain believes will give South Africa a 10 per cent advantage before a ball is bowled. In any case, the official reason given for him relinquishing the cap-

taincy at Surrey, was so he could concentrate on his wicket-keeping.

Although no one deserves the honour of captaining his country more, the idea of picking Stewart as a stop-gap is utter nonsense. Even Wasim Akram has said as much, and he knows more than a thing or two about captaining in the short term.

Instead, it is time for English cricket to be bold. There has been too much pussyfooting about by the England Cricket Board in the name of change. Hussain may not be the ideal candidate - they appeared to dry up after Mike Brearley - but along with Adam Hollioake, whose name as England's one-day captain should also be announced on Tuesday, he is the most exciting. And it is excitement, not inertia that the game needs in order to flourish.

The rain, which had continued for 36 hours, finally stopped in the morning but it still took six hours' hard work by the greenkeeping staff to enable play to resume at 2pm.

And with the carrot of 234 yards shaved off the course, but the par of 72 unaltered, the scoring was easy. Despite the soggy underfoot, preferred lies and greens which were still rolling well brought the smile back to the half of the field who got to complete their first rounds.

The second half of the draw will attempt to play two rounds today. The plan is for the second round to be finished by Sunday lunchtime, allowing a cut to be made and a final 18 holes played that afternoon.

However, the weather forecast for the weekend is worse than for the first two days.

**Scores, page 19**

### Clay spares Brite blushes

#### Cycling

By Rob Nicholl

JON CLAY kept the all-conquering Brite team's reputation intact with a stage victory, after their tactics were spilt by punctures on the opening day of the Travelsure four-day Tour of Lancashire.

The Yorkshireman, 12 years a professional, is within one second of the overall leader, Kevin Dawson, who finished third behind Clay and Mark McKay at the end of a testing 59.5 miles in the Peak District near Oldham.

"I was not happy with the way the race went," Clay said. "To have only one of us in a break of eight riders was not the way we like it. That is why my team were chasing although I was with the leaders. I could not share the pace-making with my co-leaders because of this. I just had to sit in."

His team-mates David Tanner and Chris Walker were delayed by punctures, so only Clay was able to counter when the decisive escape came after 36 miles. He has now won three Premier Calendar races this year, and the other four Premier races have fallen to his team.

Dawson knows well the misery of punctures. They have plagued him in recent races even when he gave Britain a second place in the Tour of Guadeloupe. "Perhaps my bad luck is over now," he said, having taken the leader's yellow jersey by winning four of the intermediate sprints.

That effort earned him a 12-second deduction from his race time and coupled with a five-second bonus for third place lifted him above Clay for today's 73.5 miles from Bolton to Holcombe near Ramsbottom.

**Rain  
finally  
relents  
for Lee**

#### Golf

By Andy Farrel  
in Agatz, Connacht

LEE WESTWOOD, in his first round in Europe this season, was pleased with the start and the finish but not much in between when he finally got to play his first round in the Italian Open.

Having been waiting to tee off, when play was first suspended on Thursday morning, the 25-year-old from Workop chipped in for an eagle at the 10th, his first hole, and then finished eagle-birdie yesterday.

His four-under 68 left him four strokes off the lead held by Swede Patrik Sjoland. He was two ahead of his countryman Klas Eriksson, who holed in one at the fourth hole immediately after Martin Gates had achieved the same feat in the previous group.

Westwood said: "I played awful. I missed a lot of greens, but my putting kept me in it. The greens were still good and I don't think we would have played on many other courses after all the rain."

The par-five eighth hole on the Castelconturbia course was shortened by 135 yards to 385, the usual length for a short par-four, and produced a multitude of birdies and its fair share of eagles. Westwood hit a three-wood and a wedge to four feet for his eagle, while Jose-Maria Olazabal finished birdie-eagle at the eighth and ninth to also reach four under. Jarmo Sandelin closed birdie-eagle-gagle to be on the same mark.

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**Scores, page 19**

## Lara on rapid fire for landmark century

Miles Carey  
at Edgbaston

Warwickshire 260-9;  
Northamptonshire 195  
Warwickshire win by 71 runs

YOU MAY think that Brian Lara has already achieved more than most in his cricketing life, but until yesterday a one-day century for Warwickshire had eluded him. His blundered from a mere 96 balls put that right and paved the way for a victory over Northamptonshire in the over Northamptonshire in the

Benson and Hedges Cup which was more straightforward than either side dared have anticipated.

Lara was clearly in the mood right from the start and although the occasional ball got past his bat, mostly he treated the bowler with contempt, with the honourable exception of his West Indian colleague Franklin Rose, and some strokes were breathtaking even by his standards.

At 62 for 3, there was plenty of room for Lara's decision to bat first to misfire; but he made his first 50 runs out of 65 from

the covers. He improvised once too often against Jeremy Snape's off-spin when, with nine overs remaining, he seemed capable of taking Warwickshire well beyond 300.

It scarcely mattered. An impressive, penetrative spell with the new ball by Ed Giddins quickly undermined Northamptonshire. Moving the ball around from a full length and good off-stump line, he removed Richard Mongomerie and David Capel and also had Rob Bailey dropped first ball.

Lara completed his second 50 from 41 deliveries, picking off balls that were barely short of a length or giving himself room to play glorious strokes through

## Hampshire stalled

David Llewellyn  
at the Parks

British Universities v Hampshire

THE WEATHER may have been unusually wet but that was no excuse for Hampshire finding themselves bogged down as they did against the cream of British Universities. They found runs in general difficult to come by, and Robin Martin-Jenkins in particular

Greg Loderidge, has played a Test for New Zealand. It explained, in part, why they were able to fight back from the dire situation of seven down to 129 into the relative respectability of their final total.

It just needed a touch of steel from Martin-Jenkins and his eighth-wicket partner David Leather. Together with them played with a maturity that later seemed beyond their more experienced opponents and patiently added 48 in 12 overs.

Even when Martin-Jenkins departed, run out for 39, the leather continued, having his score before he ran out of overs. At no point did Hampshire seem able to turn the screw. In fact they made life difficult by contributing 20 wides to the Students' cause.

They had opportunities enough, not least when James had accounted for Loderidge and Luke Sutton in his second over and moments later took a marvelous catch running in some 15 yards to hang on to Will House's attempted sweep, sadly they seemed unable to exploit any of them.

MIKE ATHERTON'S early dismissal yesterday left Lancashire struggling as they chased Leicester's formidable target of 284 in the Benson and Hedges Cup tie at Grace Road.

The former England captain was caught by Paul Nixon off Alan Mullally for 12, with Lancashire desperately trying to reach 284 in the Benson and Hedges Cup tie at Grace Road.

The former England captain was caught by Paul Nixon off Alan Mullally for 12, with Lancashire desperately trying to reach 284 in the Benson and Hedges Cup tie at Grace Road.

Leicester's opening partner, Andrew Flintoff, was caught by Aftab Habib off Phil Simmons for 23 and was left to 161 for 7.

Nottinghamshire's fightback was not helped by the early loss of Paul Pollard (22), bowled by Newman, but he had reached 53 for one off 145 overs.

Glamorgan's Robert Croft scored 67 and Tony Cottey an unbeaten 54 to help the Welshmen's cause as they left Ireland chasing 230 for 9 in Dublin.

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That effort earned him a 12-second deduction from his race time and coupled with a five-second bonus for third place lifted him above Clay for today's 73.5 miles from Bolton to Holcombe near Ramsbottom.

### Cricket scoreboard

#### Benson and Hedges Cup

One day

British Universities v Hampshire

The Parks: Hampshire, with five wickets standing, require 134 runs off 9.5 overs to beat Warwickshire.

Warwickshire won toss

WARRICKSHIRE

Edgbaston: Warwickshire

\*S J Dean b Bowler

\*D M Treadaway b Bowler

M A Ward b Bowler

D L Morris b Bowler

\*D L Mullaney b Bowler

M A Ward b Bowler

\*D L Mullaney b Bowler

M A Ward b Bowler

\*D L Mullaney b Bowler

M A Ward b Bowler

\*D L Mullaney b Bowler

M A Ward b Bowler

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M A Ward b Bowler

\*D L Mullaney b Bowler

M A Ward b Bowler

\*D L Mullaney b Bowler

Rain  
finally  
relents  
for Lee

## Oliver's throwback style winning attention and fights

SPENCER OLIVER'S smile is important. It tells you that whatever he has paid in sweat and pain to be in possession of the European super-bantamweight championship he is defending against Sergei Devakov at the Albert Hall tonight was worth it. It tells you that he has no doubts about where he is headed and what he is going to do when he gets there.

In an era that has seen bravado become professional boxing's currency, Oliver is a throwback: nice kid, dedicated in preparation, trouble only to the fighters who are put up against him.

Grandson of a booth boxer the 23-year-old from Barnet, Hertfordshire trades in qualities that made him a shoe-in for the Young Fighter of the Year award he received last week at the British boxing writ-

ers' annual dinner. On display alongside the European Championship belt when he sat down with Devakov a few days ago it carries the legacy of 18 previous winners who went on to become world champions.

If Oliver's manager, the former heavyweight Jess Harding, was carrying things a bit far when suggesting a bet for charity that the future could hold a victory over Nassem Hamed if the World Boxing Council featherweight remains in the 91st division) faith in his fighter's world title potential is understandable.

On the basis of Oliver's 14 straight professional victories, and especially the form shown earlier this year when stopping the former International Boxing Federation champion Fabrice Benichou of France in a title defence, no super-ban-

A young British fighter with world title ambitions realises one of his boxing dreams tonight, Ken Jones reports

tamweight can afford to take him lightly.

Looking ahead to the prospect of hooking up with the winner of the World Boxing Council contest between the Mexican title-holder Erik Morales and the Las Vegas-based Ulsterman Wayne McCullough, he said, "We're looking at a world title shot before the end of the year. If McCullough comes through I'll be his first defence. I think McCullough's style is made for me although it will be a tough fight. A big money fight too because I think it would sell well over here."

Oliver's burgeoning popularity can be found in the fact that his appearance

tonight at the Albert Hall has brought in £50,000 in advance bookings. "Jess [Harding] has done a terrific job," Oliver added, "and now it's starting to pay off."

Radiating confidence, Oliver looks forward to showing his hands at the Albert Hall where many outstanding contests took place before escalating costs forced promoters to look elsewhere. "I've always had this thing about boxing there," Oliver said, "and now it's going to happen."

Coming forward as the European Boxing Union mandatory challenger, Devakov is not expected to cause Oliver serious problems but the champion knows that this is

not the time to be taking unnecessary chances. "From what I've seen Devakov is a typical east European fighter, similar in style to those I fight as an amateur. Doesn't hang hard, comes to you and throws a lot of punches."

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union life has changed considerably for the 30-year-old Ukrainian whose boxing skills brought many benefits under the old system. As an international sportsman Devakov was provided with an apartment and all his needs were met by the state. "Now I have to fight for a living," he said through an interpreter. "It has not been easy but we have to live with the changes." He hopes to make a home in Israel with his Jewish wife and their young child.

Gaunt, with piercing eyes and a dole-

ful expression, Devakov lost a points decision to Vincenzo Belcastro in April 1995 when attempting to gain the vacant European super-bantamweight title before winning the unconsidered International Boxing Organisation crown almost two years ago with a four-round stoppage of Luis Guzman in Kiev. Since undefeated Devakov was first seen in the UK last October when he outpointed Carl Allen in a six rounder at Muswell Hill.

Now established as a real up and comer in British boxing, Oliver's style, one that requires him to absorb punishment, suggests that he will not have a long career but a world championship is certainly not beyond him. The victory expected tonight will set him up for the real business.

## Holgate changes spots to fit Wigan's template

STEPHEN HOLGATE is one of a dwindling band at Wigan. The cut-price signings of their couple of years in the semi-wilderness - Ian Sherratt, Lee Hansen, Stuart Lester, Doc Murray, Paul Koloi - where are they now?

Keighley and Lancashire Lynx, that's where. But not Holgate; thanks to his success in re-inventing himself, he is at Wembley.

What is more, Holgate, an under-employed substitute for most of his first season at Centr Park, will be starting the game in a position he had hardly played before this year.

"I once complained to my coach at Warrington that I wasn't getting enough of the ball in the second row, so he put me at prop to get smashed around a bit," he says.

It was as a second row that Wigan signed him for Warrington almost 15 months ago, but his impact was limited and the club's returning coach, John Monie, knew at first glance that he wasn't his idea of a second row.

Monie likes long-striding back-rowers, who can get into wide positions and create a bit of chaos. Holgate, more of a compact, dogged midfield graft, did not fit the template at all.

It was a pre-season friendly, ironically back on Cumbrian territory at Whitehaven, that proved the turning point. The word was that Holgate was on

A cut-price signing has reinvented himself to become a key figure in today's rugby league Challenge Cup final. Dave Hadfield reports

his way out, with Hull, Castleford and Halifax all monitoring developments as Monie stepped up his clear-out.

"I thought it was going to be my last game for Wigan, so I might as well give it my best shot. He must have been quite impressed, because he called me in and told me that he didn't want me to go."

One of Monie's new signings, Tony Mestrov, broke a finger, which gave Holgate an extended run at prop and, when Mestrov was ready to return, it was at the expense not of the converted Cumbrian, but of Neil Cowie and Terry O'Connor, both of whom have packed down in the front row for Great Britain but will be on the bench this afternoon.

Along with the change of position, Holgate found that he had to undergo a change of attitude.

"Last year I was only doing what I had to in training, but I've looked around and seen that players like Andy Farrell and Denis Bettis are always doing a bit extra. In the end, that shows it is Holgate's ability to do that, particularly in defence that has won him the vote today.

Against a Sheffield Eagles side whose strongest department is its front row, those early exchanges could be crucial.

Holgate's one regret is that his mother will not be at Wembley to see him battle through them. "She's had to go into hos-

pital for an operation for gallstones. She tried to have the operation put back, but they wouldn't do that."

"She was in hospital when I played for England as well, but my dad will be there."

It was Ellery Hanley's selection of Holgate to play against France in 1995 that first nudged him into public notice, but this is a much bigger match and one that he wants to experience as much as possible.

"John normally says something before the game to tell you how long you're going to be on. The idea is to keep up the intensity for as long as possible. With Neil and Terry on the bench, he's always got other options."

It's a 17-man game these day, coaches are always saying, so does it really matter who gets first crack at the Eagles this afternoon?

"It certainly matters to the players who start," says Monie. "It's an honour to be in the starting team at Wembley, even though the two coming off the bench might get more time on the field than the starters."

There's another way of determining that it still matters. Look around the Wigan props on the day that their line-up was announced and only two were smiling. They were Tony Mestrov and - with an extra grin that summed up the way he has jumped the queue - Stephen Holgate.



Stephen Holgate: Switch in position and attitude

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

## Watson treads the Wembley way after changing his ways



Watson: Chequered history

DAVE WATSON has his opportunity this afternoon to make sure that his chequered career in Britain will be remembered for his ability to cause problems on the field, rather than off it.

Watson plays at Wembley this afternoon for his sixth English club, Sheffield Eagles taking a chance where others would have said "never again."

Among his escapades are a positive test for cannabis, another test side-stepped and various drink-driving offences.

"I've been a bad man at times," says Watson. "In fact, playing rugby league is the only thing I've been good at." Watson's talent has rarely been in doubt, only the stability of his lifestyle.

"That's why this game means so much to me. It's my chance to show that I'm really a pretty good player. I'm in the right frame of mind to have a big game at Wembley."

After leaving Britain under a cloud, Watson played with dis-

tinguished for Cronulla, Gold Coast and the South Queensland Crushers. When the Crushers folded, however, his wife contacted his old Bradford coach, Peter Fox, to see whether there were any likely lifelines from Britain.

"Peter knew that John Kear wanted a stand-off at Sheffield and the club has taken me on

give me licence to do whatever I want on the field. The difference is that I look after myself off the field now."

Sheffield do not want Watson to become too conventional. "He's a wild-card personality and a wild-card player," says the club's general manager, Ralph Rimmer. "Or as Kear puts it:

"We're a very well organised side, but we needed a game-breaker - someone who can produce the unpredictable."

At 30, Watson is still as wiry

and strong as ever and still sees possibilities that would not be apparent to players who have had more structured careers.

"I can see us doing really well. Everyone says Wigan can't be beaten, but I remember being said about Australia when I played in the Kiwi side that beat them in 1991."

Watson, better than most, knows that the game can be full of all sorts of unexpected twists and turns. He intends to provide some this afternoon.

### Sporting Digest

#### McCord's double ambition

Basketball

TWICE already this season John McCord has proved to be the man for the big occasion. And if the Ivy Leaguer from Cornell University relives in the lime-light again this weekend his performance could lift Thames Valley Tigers to a double, writes Richard Taylor.

McCord was voted Most Valuable Player in their National Cup Final triumph in January and again in the All Star Game in March. He comes to Wembley for the

Budweiser Championships in

test on preventing history being made.

If London Towers, Birmingham Bullets or Manchester Giants win the play-offs it will be the first time in the league's history that different clubs have won the four domestic titles.

McCord, a graduate in applied economics and business management, spurned several glamorous basketball programmes to go to the academically demanding Cornell.

#### Agassi steals thunder from second seed

Tennis

ANDRE AGASSI dodged sprinkles of rain - and one mighty thunderclap - on his way to a 6-2, 6-2 win over the second seed Jonas Bjorkman to reach the semi-finals of the BMW Open in Munich yesterday.

The world No 20 wasted no time, breaking Bjorkman in the first game and needing just 59 minutes under darkening skies to surge to his third career win against the Swede.

A chilly crowd warmed to Agassi in the first game of the second set when he hid behind a ball boy after a sharp clap of thunder, but there were few real scares for the eighth seed.

The rapid-fire match was in stark contrast to the day's first court marathon. It took nearly three hours for the Spaniard Galo Blanco to win a baseline duel 7-5, 5-7, 7-6 over the Dutchman Kenny de Schepper.

The women's Tadayuki Okada on a Honda was fifth, sandwiched between the Modena KR3s of American Kenny Roberts Jr and German Ralf Waldmann.

The 125cc practice was dominated by Italian and Japanese riders, who claimed the top eight positions. Roberto Locatelli took provisional pole from Brazil in the second minutes. Doohan finished 1.3sec behind Agassi for 12th.

"It was a difficult situation,

After a troubled past, a Sheffield Eagle has landed on his feet. Dave Hadfield reports

as a risk. More than anything, I want to prove to my family. They're the ones I let down more than anyone else."

It is that family, especially his two young children, who keep him on the straight and narrow now. "I don't get the chance to go out that much any more," he says of his old ways. "Sheffield

last match of the season against hosts Hull Lions tomorrow as the newly crowned Premier League champions because their nearest rivals, Bradford, drew on Thursday night.

Schelle 04's midfielder Oliver Held faces possible court action for handling the ball in a German League game against Cologne on Wednesday. Held helped Cologne to a 1-0 win over Berlin on Tuesday.

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Watson: Chequered history

#### England hope for testing time

Hockey

ENGLAND'S teams continue their World Cup preparations today with the men playing Belgium in Brussels and the women tackling the Netherlands today and tomorrow in the Flockey Stadium in Utrecht, one of the two venues for the Cup, writes Bill Colwill.

Having completed his team line-up during the week with the selection of David Luckes as his second goalkeeper, coach Barry Dancer will be looking for stronger opposition than that provided by Scotland, Wales and France over the past two weeks.

ends. Belgium, however, are unlikely to oblige but a more thorough test will be supplied by New Zealand, who England face soon afterwards in an attractive double header.

The women's convincing victories in the Four Nations' Tournament in Massachusetts which ended last weekend provide plenty of optimism, but a clearer picture of progress will be possible after this weekend's two-game series against the Dutch, and then against the world and Olympic Champions, Australia, at Milton Keynes on the 12th and 14th May.

Agassi's double header against the Dutch will be testing time for the men, having to wait so long, but I played some really solid tennis," Agassi said.

It was a difficult situation, having to wait so long, but I played some really solid tennis," Agassi said.

Agassi: Double header

## Broccoli and bicycles: my part in Arsenal's success



THE  
GAFFER  
TAPES

I HAVE, in the past, been accused of being egotistical, self-centred and conceited, sometimes all at the same time. Now, Barry Gaffer's not that kind of guy and to prove it, even though Barry Gaffer is facing a traumatic weekend Barry Gaffer would rather concentrate on the magnificent achievement of one of Barry Gaffer's many friends in football.

Step forward "Arsene of the Arse", as Monsieur Wenger is known to his closest friends, and congratulations on your imminent championship. I can take particular pleasure in your success, not just because my old man is an Arsenal fan, as the song goes, but because, in a small way, I had a little part to play in it.

Well, maybe not that little. I can remember when David Dein, the power behind Herbert Chapman's bus, was looking for a new manager. "Barry," he said, "obviously I would choose you, but we're looking for someone foreign - any ideas?"

Naturally I suggested Arsene, who I knew had forged a massive reputation in Japan where his innovative use of sushi and teriyaki sauce had caused a stir from the Kashima Antlers to the Yokohama Flugels.

Arse and I hit it off immediately and he quickly confided in me. "Zézé is a beaupou job, but when it comes to Eegeesh football je ne sais quoi. I have all zeeze old Arsenal types around me, but no one I can truly trust. Will you be my eyes and my ears Barry?"

First I explained about Herbert and George Graham, both championship winners, both involved in dodgy accounting, one a hero the other a villain. It was important to get the distinction right. I told him Chapman equalled Platini (God-like status, no criticism allowed), Graham equalled Tapie (forgiven by most fans, some media, none of the board).

Then I found him some players. Having spent so long in Japan he was a bit out of

date, but I convinced him Patrick Vieira, Emmanuel Petit and Marc Overmars were a better bet than Papin, Tigana and Johny Rep.

The main thing was persuading Arse that sushi and rice was not going to go down well at the club canteen. "Battered fish and chips, they'll eat that," I told him, "but raw fish and Uncle Ben's? Mais non."

We ended up going round to my mum's house and, after trying a few possibilities like barbecued cauliflower and roasted spinach, we settled on the grilled broccoli which has become so famous\*. The boys love it, especially since we allowed them to have ketchup with it.

After that it was largely plain sailing, although I had to have a word when he considered playing Martin Keown in the hole during Dennis Bergkamp's suspension. The only other dispute was over his Tour de Circular Nord idea.

Arsene's a big cycling fan - it explains his lean frame - and

he thought the team would benefit from a weekly cycle race around the A406. I took him down to Neasden in the rush hour, said: "See you in Gants Hill in half an hour", drove down there and waited.

When he arrived, two hours later, his face covered in grime, his knees bloodied, his back wheel mangled and barely able to breathe for carbon-monoxide poisoning, he agreed I had a point. Instead they now go for a quick pedal round Chigwell's millionaire's row, and they all make sure to ring their bells going past Alan Sugar's house.

Obviously I would like to keep my part in Arsene's rise quiet. Fergie might not be too chuffed for one, and my own chairman will probably use such "outside activities" as an excuse for giving me the bullet - although it is not as if I've stooped to advertising Pizza Hut.

Alternatively, I might need a bit of publicity as he might just point to the league table

instead. If we don't win today we're down. It's very disappointing after all the hard work on the training ground.

We've got the cleanest cones in the Premiership and eight different types of coloured bike, some of them fluorescent. It's taken me a long time to get such a collection together but it's been worth it - when the sun's shining the two-a-side matches really catch the eye.

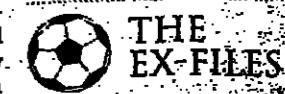
We're almost at full strength for today's showdown, although Shaun Prone and Ivor Niggle are both out with broken jaws after an unfortunate start to the club cricket season. Prone had his broken trying to pull the local tearaway quickie, Niggle had his broken after trying to pull the local tearaway quickie's girlfriend.

\* *The Highbury Café Cookbook - 101 Ways to Grill Broccoli*, by Arsene Wenger and Barry Gaffer, now on sale at all good bookshops price £15.99.

Barry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore

## SIDELINES

### Ball's walk-on part in tale of two cities



ONE name would be guaranteed to unite the rival factions when Stoke City meet Manchester City in a potentially explosive relegation battle at a sold-out Britannia Stadium tomorrow. Alan Ball took both clubs down, so the irony will be stark indeed if he now keeps Portsmouth up at their expense.

The two City have had some three dozen players in common down the decades. Stoke certainly enjoyed the better of Peter Dohring, pipe-smoking captain of their League Cup-winning team of 1972, and of Mike Shelton, the £27m striker who is embroiled in the survival struggle with QPR. Adrian Heath, Peter Beagrie, Wayne Biggs and Nigel Gough also made a greater impact at the Victoria Ground.

Stoke has traditionally been a stopping-off point for the Blues' surplus stock. David Brightwell, Wayne Clarke, Joe Corrigan and Harry Dowd all went to the Potters on loan; Jason Beckford, John Gidman and Dennis Theart made the same move on free transfers, and Ian Scott, for £175,000. Sammy McIlroy, widely touted to be Stoke's next manager, was one of the few to reverse the trend.

Others who figure in the shared history include Tony Henry, Barry Siddle, Dave Watson, Howard Kendall and Paul Stewart. Oh, and an England colleague of Ball's who, in 16 years at Maine Road, won all the major domestic honours and then gave Alan Durban, Stoke's current caretaker manager, three stalwart seasons for £50,000. How both sides could use Mike Doyle's indomitable spirit tomorrow.

#### Ten things

that  
Palace's  
Swede  
Tomas  
Brolin  
might be  
missing  
today



- 1 His hometown, Hudiksvall. Nicknamed "Glaða Hudik" (lively Hudiksvall) by 19th century timber barons.
- 2 Lilljärdén - an idyllic lake in Hudiksvall. Said to be perfect for a leisurely stroll, a pace even Brolin can still muster.
- 3 Hudiksvall's buildings. "Old and new, in harmonious juxtaposition," says the tourist literature. Nothing like the future management structure at Selhurst Park then.
- 4 An aura of Abba.
- 5 Seal safari in the Hudiksvall archipelago.
- 6 Kottbular och makaroner - meatballs and pasta, a favourite.
- 7 Hälsingehamn. A regional folk dance contest, where participants are bussed around villages and dance in big circles.
- 8 Falcon beer. Like the Eagles, it goes down well.
- 9 The Speeders. A shadow's tribute band from Hudiksvall.
- 10 Viking artefacts, including cutlery carved from trees. (But Brolin at least has the Premiership's wooden spoon to remind him of home).

## NAME OF THE GAME No 33: NEWCASTLE UNITED

For 10 years until 1892 the pride of Tyneside were known as Newcastle East End. The name was adopted in response to the formation of another club in the city, Newcastle West End, who moved to St James' Park in 1886. When West End went out of existence, East End were invited to move into St James' Park. Following the move the club voted in 1892 to change its name to Newcastle United.

## THIS WEEK

ON 5 May 1951, all eyes turned to the bottom of the First Division where the two sides to be relegated were still to be decided.

One newspaper wrote: "Chelsea, Everton and Sheffield Wednesday are genuinely admired even outside the districts in which they play and failure, whether it hits, will be regretted by many people besides the local supporters."

"This morning the position is that Chelsea (home to Bolton) and Sheffield Wednesday (home to Everton) have 30 points, and Everton have 32."

"The tangle will almost certainly be complicated tonight by goal average, as both Chelsea and Wednesday can be expected to win - a probability which would make all three level on points."

"At present Chelsea have the advantage in this respect. Yet if Wednesday win 6-0 and Chelsea win 1-0, then Wednesday can avoid the drop."

"As it transpired, Wednesday did manage to win 6-0, "in a brilliant, pulsating affair... their victory was due to superb football." Unfortunately for them, Chelsea won 4-0, meaning Wednesday's triumph was in vain."

"Wednesday were relegated and Chelsea escaped. Everton went down, a feat not repeated since. (Yet)."

As Doncaster Rovers prepare for their last Nationwide League game today they might be heartened by the experiences of previous clubs which dropped into the GM Vauxhall Conference.

Although Newport County went out of business the season after their exit from the League, four of the five other clubs to have been relegated have bounced back. Hereford United, who dropped out last year, are the only other club not to have done so.

"Lincoln City (relegated in 1987) and Darlington (1989) both returned to the League at the first attempt. Colchester United (1990) took two years to win back their place, while Halifax Town (1993) have spent five years out of the League. However, they will return next season after winning this season's Conference championship."

With the exception of Maidstone United, who went out of existence not long after winning promotion, the teams who have come up from the Conference have generally fared well in their new environment.

Darlington, Barnet and Wycombe Wanderers all went on to further promotions - although the first two are now back in the Third Division - as have Macclesfield Town following their step up from the Conference last year.

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e-mail address: [spor@independent.co.uk](mailto:spor@independent.co.uk)

## Nakayama: the man who can't stop scoring

Japan

MASASHI NAKAYAMA continued his incredible goal-scoring spree on Wednesday by netting his fourth successive J-League hat trick.

Nakayama has now scored an amazing 16 goals in his last four matches, with tallies of five, four, four and three. His latest hat-trick came in Jubilo Iwata's 4-0 midweek victory over Consadole Sapporo.

Nakayama tops the League's scoring chart with 18 goals. He has also hit 12 goals in 24 games for Japan and is a certainty to lead their attack at the World Cup.

One of the more obscure hat-tricks of his career was scored in the humble surroundings of Scunthorpe United's Glanford Park stadium - a football venue for the 1991 World Student Games. In a 3-3 draw against Great Britain, both captains found the net three times before half-time. They were Nakayama and Jon McCarthy, now with Birmingham City.

### AROUND THE WORLD BY RUPERT METCALF

Cameroon

ROGER MILLA, the player who did most to put his country on the football map, has been shunned by Cameroon in the build-up to their fourth World Cup finals.

Twice the African player of the year, Millia is unhappy at not being invited to help with Cameroon's preparations for the tournament. "I'm worried about how things will go for the

team in this World Cup," he said. "There's no longer any solidarity among the players, who are more interested in the financial than sporting aspect."

Cameroon, eliminated in the first round of the recent African Nations' Cup, have changed coach three times this season, with the Frenchman Claude le Roy now in charge.

Now 46, Millia, who played in three World Cups, will still be involved in the 1998 tournament as a French TV analyst.

France

PARIS ST-GERMAIN have approached South Africa's World Cup coach, Philippe Troussier, for next season. Troussier met PSG's new executive president, Charles Bienvé, in Italy last week while watching South Africa's striker Phil Masinga.

PSG, a disappointing eighth in the French League with one game to go, are undergoing a major overhaul for next season which includes the departure of the Brazilian coach, Ricardo.



Jaap Stam (right), the Dutch defender who is on his way to Manchester United for £10m, playing for PSV Eindhoven in their Dutch Cup semi-final victory over Twente Enschede this week. Stam's own goal gave Twente the lead but PSV recovered to win 2-1.

39 days...

until the World Cup finals begin in France

SOUTH KOREA have sprung a surprise by including a 19-year-old forward who only became a professional footballer this year in a provisional squad of 22 players for France. Lee Dong-kook, from the Pohang Steelers club, becomes the youngest player ever called up for the national team. A former track sprinter, he has not surprisingly made a name for himself with his pace on the football pitch as well as the athletics arena. He has, however, only played nine matches for his club, in which he has scored four goals.

## The dizzy heights of ninth place

AMONG the points to be won and lost in tomorrow's First Division programme, you might be forgiven for thinking that any gained by Stockport County at Edgeley Park would be rather less important than, say, those sought by Middlesbrough, Stoke or Manchester City. Well, yes and no. While I'm not claiming that another good home result for County will overshadow relegation for Manchester City, one more point for County will secure ninth place in the First Division.

Ninth place, hub? So? Ninth place for many of the teams in the division would mean disaster. But for us, ninth would represent the highest placing in our 115-year history.

To the Johnny-come-latelys proudly sporting the latest Man Utd (oops, sorry, it's Arsenal this year, isn't it?) replica kit that might seem a pretty pathetic boast, but to those football fans who recognise that teams like Stockport are an integral part of what has sustained the professional game in England for all of those 115 years and more, it's an achievement well worth celebrating.

Of course, we're not really supposed to be in this division. It's a bit above our station, in the same way teams like Sunderland and Middlesbrough are below theirs. Fans of both these clubs took great delight in informing us of our true status when they visited Edgeley - or at least

that's what I took the many cries of "Mickey Mouse club" to mean. Odd, then, that both sets of fans seemed so happy with the single point their teams scraped, Sunderland in particular being strangely delighted with a last-minute equaliser.

They weren't the only side to be outplayed at Edgeley: the success of this season has been based almost exclusively

on excellent home form. Edgeley Park might not have quite the same ring as Highbury, Old Trafford, or Anfield, but when you consider that we have had the grand total of five wins on our travels, a mere two draws, and a staggering 16 defeats, it's all the more surprising that we're not fulfilling most pre-season predictions of a swift return from whence we came.

I must admit the thought of experiencing my first relegation as a County fan did sit across my mind more than once. When we clinched promotion on a memorable night at Chesterfield (and you don't often set those last five words in close proximity) in April last year, I genuinely thought the First Division

play-offs were not beyond us in the coming season.

We had already shown, by beating four Premiership teams in our Coca-Cola Cup run - three of them on their own grounds - that we could live with teams not merely in the division we were joining, but those in the one above.

However, Dave and Paul Jones (whose managerial acumen and goalkeeping skill respectively are evidenced by Southampton's first season without a relegation battle since the Middle Ages) departed, the board turned to the relatively unproven Gary Megson, poached from Blackpool, and the fans' thoughts turned to a season of struggle.

To Megson's immense credit, it was not so. Although we made a dreadful start, things were turned around to such an extent that at one stage we were actually sitting in a play-off position. It couldn't last, however, and as the season progressed, financial exigency meant that our board were not able to turn down bids from Birmingham and Middlesbrough for Chris Marsden and Alan Armstrong respectively - two of the stars of last year's campaign.

Chuck in no fewer than five broken legs (belonging to five different players, in case you were wondering), and it's no surprise that we could not hang on to sixth. What is absolutely amazing, however, is that we've still got a chance of ninth. Believe me, that's worth celebrating.

**May the BEST team win**  
**(As long as it's yours)**

For Nationwide Building Society, official sponsor of the Football League, it's been another great season.

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# Wenger unruffled by talisman's absence

EVEN by his standards, Arsène Wenger looked impressively unruffled as he conducted what will probably be his last round of press conferences and television interviews before Arsenal are crowned champions.

The top flight's two longest-serving clubs meet for what promises to be a momentous occasion tomorrow at Highbury, where victory for Arsenal would complete the first leg of a remarkable double and send Everton perilously close to relegation for the first time in 47 years.

Wenger would have little time for Everton's plight even if Arsenal did not want the three points so badly. Anything less than a win might leave the Gunners facing awkward trips to An-

field and Villa Park in search of a result, before meeting Newcastle in the Cup final in a fortnight's time. But those who came yesterday seeking tell-tale signs of stress in the enigmatic French manager's make-up were sorely disappointed.

"It seems I still have a lot to learn about English tradition," he said with a smile after being informed that it is usual for the newly crowned Footballer of the Year to attend the Football Writers' dinner with his manager, even if it is less than 48 hours before being involved in the FA Cup final. Wenger originally had no intention of attending, far less Dennis Bergkamp if the architect of Arse-

nal's success on the field has

recovered from injury in time to play a part at Wembley.

"He has a pulled hamstring," Wenger confirmed. "It looks quite superficial but some fibres have been torn and that means two weeks at least, maybe three. He's had such a great season but unfortunately we have to finish it without him. I would have loved to have him until the last day but now it looks as though the championship is over for him. I still have a small hope that he could be back for the final but it [the recovery time] would be very, very short."

Following a disappointingly early exit from Europe and an indifferent spell in mid-season, Wenger can be sure that his own achievements will be feted

Adam Szerter finds the Arsenal manager (right) calmly facing a crucial time without his Footballer of the Year



praise upon his talismanic Dutchman. "The beginning of the season was his biggest contribution because the team had no history at all," Wenger said. "They didn't know how well they could do, and he and Ian Wright were determined to help build the confidence up in the side. I think in the first 20 games they scored 18 or 19 goals together, which was tremendous."

"Dennis was unstoppable, not only because he scored goals but it looked so easy for him to run at people and through defences. He looked physically very strong. His third goal at Leicester, when he clipped the ball over the goalkeeper, was world class, and I also loved the goal he scored at Southampton

because it's a part of Dennis you don't often see. It was done with great determination, where he pulled the defender and went through and missed it with a very hard shot into the angle."

"He's a creative thinker, and I would say this kind of player needs a lot of freedom. One part of his brain is 'killer', because he waits for the right moment and tries to use it. He's also at the age when you perform best, between 28 and 32. You have the skill and the maturity. He can still improve in the next three years because it's in him to try. He loves perfection so there are no barriers for him."

If there is one criticism that can be levelled at Bergkamp it is his propensity for red and ye-

low cards, and Wenger was honest enough to admit: "I think his temperament will always be a problem because he has a provocative way of playing for the defenders. So he will always be fouled and when he's fouled he doesn't feel happy and lets the referee know. I think he has improved during the season and, he's been man-marked many times, which creates more controversial situations than zonal marking."

Bergkamp's absence is a sad way for the English season to end for the Footballer of the Year, but maybe even greater glory lies around the corner for him in France this summer - when Arsenal fans will doubtless still be pinching themselves.

## Dalglish goes on charm defensive

Despite recent criticism, the Newcastle manager remains determined to keep his public and private persona separate, as Glenn Moore discovers

WITH a series of clicks the tape recorders went off and Kenny Dalglish's smile came on like an electric light. As it spread warmth and bonhomie across a Durham restaurant the other Kenny Dalglish, the one with hooded eyes, curled lip and sardonic tongue, slipped away through some unguarded back door. It will wait in the shadows until the next press conference.

Dalglish is not unique among football people in apparently possessing two personalities: many great players have reacted to the referee's whistle like a hypnotist's subject to a click of the fingers. Mark Hughes is the classic example, metamorphosing from soft-voiced, gentle family man to rumbustious, mauling centre-forward at the first peep from an Acme Thunderer.

Dalglish's transformation is subtler but no less startling. It has also been influential. His wariness with the media - both print and broadcast - has, along with the nature of his teams and the actions of a couple of club directors, turned Newcastle from everybody's favourite other team to the Premiership's most unwanted.

Today they play host to Chelsea with many neutrals still hoping they fail to gain the point or two they may yet require to avoid relegation. In a fortnight they contest the FA Cup final in the position, unimaginable two years ago, of being neither favoured nor favourites to beat Arsenal.

The recent post-match press conference after these two clubs met at Highbury, when Dalglish spoke of "people like you wanting to put knives in my back" and criticised one journalist's girth, and another reference last month to newspapers "only being fit to wipe dogshit off your shoes", brought Dalglish's relationship with the media to a new low. Thus on Thursday, partly on the advice of trusted allies, Dalglish participated in what the PR people would call a "charm offensive".

On the record, with the tape recorders working, he was polite but guarded, occasionally evasive and combative over team selection, Alan Shearer's conduct and the Stevenage affair. Off the record he was expansive, candid and often funny. This part of the conversation must remain confidential but, though the delivery was as defensive as ever, his on-the-record thoughts were still more revealing than customary.

Understandably Dalglish was at his spikiest when discussing Newcastle's season. "How far away are we from being in Arsenal's position? - 14 places, that's how far."

One hack boldly interjected: "It's actually 15 places," but Dalglish refused to rise to the bait. Instead he responded to the suggestion that Newcastle's League position did not reflect the quality of the squad. "It reflects our results. You can't hide from those. It is not something anybody gets any satisfaction from, nor is it acceptable. Is there more pressure at the bottom? The principle is the same. You are there to win games. I've been brought up all my life to win games and I've been used to winning games. We just want to win games for different reasons."

There is disappointment, not frustration. It is not only for ourselves, it's for our supporters. That is the biggest disappointment. One or two things happened which have been positive. Getting to the FA Cup final gives the fans something to look forward to, something they've not had for 25 years; getting in the Champions League gave a bit of a lift, a bit of glory. It's a mystery why we can't translate our cup results into the League."

Easier opponents? "We had Easier away, Stevenage, Tranmere who put out Sunderland, Barnsley who put out Man United. It's all right saying United weren't interested but I saw it on television and they were trying.



Criticised for his spiky attitude to all forms of the media, Kenny Dalglish prefers to keep the affability he shows in private away from the public gaze

Photograph: Allsport

Then we played Sheffield United who put out Coventry. It's not our fault opponents beat teams who were favourites to go through.

"We've no regrets over Stevenage.

All we ever said was to put safety first and foremost. If we are wrong to do that we should not be a football club.

If somebody wants to watch their team play, they should be able to watch in safety and comfort. If we don't ask the question, what do we do if we go there and something unforeseen happens? There's no way we were trying to be disrespectful. I phoned them up and told them that."

It is put to Dalglish that the memories of Hillsborough must have influenced his stand. The tackles rise. "Don't even ask that question. There's no way I'm going to go over that again. That's disrespectful to the people involved."

Dalglish's conduct throughout the Hillsborough disaster and afterwards has always been impeccable. We move back to discussing Newcastle's lack of goals. Is their perceived defensiveness a reason for Alan Shearer's apparent frustration?

"You justify that [charge]. There is no justification for that, and he's never levelled criticism at anybody. He's always the first to pay tribute to the service he gets when he is banging in goals."

"He may go wide now but he used to go wide at Blackburn and cross balls in. There's no difference. Now you're using Blackburn as a measure, but we got slaughtered when we won the League at Blackburn. We were top scorers twice in three years and we were still criticised."

If this sounds familiar it is because it used to be George Graham's re-

sponse when his Arsenal team was accused of being boring. Goals may be the lifeblood of football but scoring them does not automatically equate to playing attractive football. Look at Cambridge under John Beck.

"I would much rather win a game 5-4 than lose it 1-0. You certainly can't criticise Liverpool or Celtic for lacking adventure. Anything we say to defend ourselves will be deemed as amazing but there are reasons for it. I have a fair idea of what they are, but I'm not going to go public on them."

Injuries are one aspect, so is the sale of Ginola, Ferdinand and Asprilla. All, said Dalglish, left because they wanted to go. "If someone doesn't want to go, they stay. Given the choice I wouldn't sell anybody, but every manager would say that."

Another problem Dalglish had when he arrived in January last year was the decision of his predecessor,

Kevin Keegan, to disband the reserves (a factor in Darren Huckerby's departure before Dalglish arrived). Dalglish would not criticise Keegan but he did say: "People take decisions because they think it is right. I might make different decisions, but it doesn't mean to say the other person is wrong. I'll do what I think is right and the places I've been I've always put a heavy emphasis on development while remembering the first team is the most important thing."

There is a brief flash of on-the-record wit and disclosure when he discusses his appearance on *Newsnight* with Jeremy Paxman. "They do well to get his ego on the television screen," said Dalglish.

Then the tape recorders go off, football's Victor Meldrew disappears and the other Dalglish slips into his chair. The contrast is discussed

and, since it is referred to in his autobiography, it is not betraying a confidence to reveal that the distrust stems from a bad experience with a journalist in his early days at Celtic. That may be a long time ago but he has seen ample evidence since to remain cautious and, while it may be unfair to tar all media with the same brush, he largely treats everyone equally, from golf partners to tabloid foot-soldiers.

However, neither the media, Newcastle, their fans or Dalglish himself benefit from the mutual antagonism that usually characterises his public relations. It is to be hoped that this week's meeting produces a thaw on both sides. It would be a shame if a great player and successful manager is eventually, and inaccurately, remembered by the public at large, if not those close to him, as a miserable curmudgeon.

## Last act and testament to a professional footballer's career

FOR ALL Graham Taylor's qualities - he must have a few otherwise Watford would not be currently challenging for the Second Division Championship - he is not renowned for being a master of the soundbite; unless, that is, you are a tabloid headline writer or a television documentary maker. However, the former England manager did come out with some words of wisdom during Watford's testimonial for groundsman Les Simmons, maintaining that Simmons and his ilk were "the kind of people football should be honouring, not highly paid players who are set up for life."

It's been said before, and of course not all players are that, but Taylor's sentiments were valid considering Simmons had given Watford 50 years' service. Originally in charge of the dog track around the

ground, he was promoted to head groundsmen in the early 1960s, since when he'd taken just five holidays, prepared Vicarage Road for over 1,200 senior matches, campaigned to have an errant Tony Currie reinstated to the first team and even wrung a pay rise out of Elton John.

It wasn't a huge rise, just "an extra tenner to help pay my bills" which he found in his weekly pay packet courtesy of Watford's then newly instated chairman after the board had refused his request. "That's Elton for you," he says, "good as gold."

It wasn't quite gold that Simmons received from his testimonial against Arsenal, but "over half-way to a six-figure sum," apparently. Enough for him to put away his pitch fork for a while, at least.

Good luck to him. Such key-

ality is a precious commodity in modern football, what with clubs desperately seeking a quick fix of success and players and managers seemingly at the mercy of that mentality. It's OK, of course, if you're at the top end of the scale in that elite band of players who can name your price, but not such a beautiful game for those clinging to the bottom rung of the ladder.

It's getting harder to make a case for testimonials in those higher echelons of the game where the money now flows so freely. In many respects they are anachronistic way of saying "thanks for the memories" - although at least fans can choose whether to support the player concerned. While it is argued that the worthier recipients are the one-club lower league players like Andy Porter (Port Vale), Mabbett has passed up a

small fortune in signing-on fees to stay with Tottenham, but when it came to rewarding him for that loyalty the club was parsimonious in the extreme. He even had to pay for the watering of the ground for his testimonial against Newcastle in 1996; considering the crowd was just 17,200 one assumes it was hardly a bumper payday (£100,000 was the widely quoted figure).

Still, he wasn't out of pocket: not like one of his predecessors, the former Spurs stalwart Phil Neal, whose crowd receipts were insufficient to meet the cost of bringing Bayern Munich over to White Hart Lane for his testimonial in 1973.

These days that would never happen. Firstly, the Professional Footballers' Association (according to their chief executive, Gordon Taylor) "would always help out if a player

stood to lose out financially from his testimonial." Secondly, the testimonial committee - made up of fans and professional people rather than club employees so the player gets his cash tax-free - target certain clubs as opposition because of their away support (hence the reason Newcastle, Brescia and Chelsea were preferable to Sheffield Wednesday for Ian Durrant's recent testimonial at Ibrox, and why Arsenal want to bring Celtic down for Lee Dixon's impending gig).

Such lofty opposition is not always available in these days of crowded fixture lists, although most managers will bust a gut to get a team out to support those who are the most deserving: the 50-odd players who are lost to the game every year through injury and who would, as Taylor admits, "willingly give every pen-

ny back to carry on playing." Man United sent a team to honour former Manchester City star Paul Lake recently, while Spurs sent a side containing the likes of Chris Armstrong, Mousa Sait, Steffen Iversen and Mabbett to play in a testimonial for the former Gillingham midfielder Mark O'Connor last Tuesday in front of 3,033. "You dream of thoughts coming," O'Connor admits, "and have nightmares it will be just one man and his dog, so I was thrilled."

However, the success of the night, in which O'Connor played the first 15 minutes and which Gillingham lost 3-1, and of the usual race and golf days also on his testimonial agenda, will never compensate for what he no longer has - his contract to play professional football. Now 35, O'Connor broke his leg in a tackle with

Fulham's Martin Thomas in November 1995 and was out of action for 14 months before making a comeback. "I still felt pain," he recalls, "but I kept thinking the leg would get stronger. It never did." Advised by a specialist to retire, he is now scouting and helping run Gillingham's centre of excellence while he waits for his case against Thomas to come to court.

Incidentally, Glenn Hoddle was unable to fulfil his commitment to play for Gillingham on O'Connor's night. Perhaps Hoddle doesn't really rate testimonials, which wouldn't be surprising considering a miserly crowd of 13,567 watched his testimonial against Arsenal in 1985. Hardly a testimony to his skills, but then testimonials are no substitute for the real thing, as Mark O'Connor will tell you.

OLIVIA BLAIR  
ON LOYALTY AND THE REWARDS OF TESTIMONIALS

Alan Knight (Portsmouth) and Lee Rogers (Chesterfield), few

Newcastle

prim  
Bolton v Cry  
Coventry v  
Leicester v  
Liverpool v

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## The cost of picking wrong policies

NIC CICUTTI

A few weeks ago, the Consumers' Association (CA) published a report on "financial disclosure". This is the term given to a rule forcing insurance companies to tell their prospective clients exactly how much will be taken from policies they buy.

The CA report concluded that most people were baffled by the financial information they receive and consequently don't bother reading it. "See," cried sections of the financial industry, "the CA admits that forcing us to provide all this information to clients was a waste of time."

Actually, it said nothing of the sort — merely that when details are given of how much a policy will cost to take out, the information should be clear and relevant.

It is these issues which John Chapman and Janet Walford try to address in our centre pages this week. John, formerly a senior official at the Office of Fair Trading, argues that companies rely on the poor information we are given to sell us duff products. He puts forward his own alternative form of disclosure, plus a proposal on how products should be "benchmark" or assessed as to their value at various stages in their lives.

Janet's story ties in with this. She is the highly esteemed editor of *Money Management*, a financial magazine which specialises in researching financial products, and her claim of how one company, Allied Dunbar, supplied her with wrong information for a survey on pension products makes important reading.

The company was asked to give details of what one of its 25-year policies would be worth if a person was unable

to keep paying into it after two years and the money was left in there for the rest of the term. Essentially, the answer should have been zero. But Dunbar supplied details of another policy, which would have left £13,000 in the pot — quite a difference.

I should point out that Allied Dunbar disputes her story. The company says the details it passed to *Money Management* were of a policy where a person who is unsure of their future need only pay into it for two years, without incurring huge future penalties. This, it claims, was repeatedly pointed out to the magazine and no attempted deception was involved.

Of course, Allied Dunbar, or "Allied Crowbar" as it was once known thanks to the forcefulness of its salespeople, is a highly reputable company and I accept its word entirely.

But what annoys me is its additional argument. The firm says that its advisers can only offer products based on what they are told by clients. Thankfully for all the Mystic Megs who know what their future hold two or three years down the line, the company has a policy with low charges for them.

But if you or I tell a Crowbar salesman that we expect to be able to keep on making contributions for the next 25 years and we suddenly get made redundant after two years, that's our problem, in other words.

I'm sure it is. But given that all our futures are so uncertain nowadays, I think I'll give Crowbar's products a miss.

Nic Cicutti was this week voted journalist of the year for national newspapers in the Scottish Life Pensions Awards.

## MONEY MAKEOVER

# A steady take-off for high-flyers

### THE MAKEOVER

Name: Sharon Newman

Age: 24

Occupation: Cabin crew member, British Airways

The Problem: Sharon and her partner Andy have just bought their first home near her work.

Now that much of the process, involving legal fees and other expenses are out of the way, she and Andy want to get things back on an even keel, start to plan their finances, calculate their incomings and outgoings and prepare for any future needs.

The Advice: Don't do things on an individual basis. See retirement planning in conjunction with investment, protection and every other issue.

Sharon and Andy, a self-employed shop-fitter, have just moved in together in their home a few miles from Heathrow Airport. They have a joint income of around £42,000 and Sharon feels now is the time to sit down and organise her financial affairs.

She originally found it difficult to obtain a mortgage because more than half her total income is made up of bonuses, shift and overseas allowances, and because of Andy's self-employed status. Eventually Halifax stepped in with a rate of 7.35 per cent fixed for five years. While this may not be the cheapest around, it carries no redemption penalties, allowing early repayment of the loan, or compulsory insurance purchases, which usually add at least 0.25 percentage point to the cost of a mortgage.

The couple both have pensions in place — Andy through Friends Provident, and Sharon is a member of BA's occupational scheme and also makes top-up payments into the company's Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) scheme.

The Adviser: Andrew Hunt, independent financial adviser at Maddison Monetary Management, with branches nationwide. Call freephone: 0800 074 2233.

The Advice: Now the mortgage is up and running, Sharon and Andy need to ensure that they set up an appropriate cash flow management system, in order to understand how their income

and expenditure match up. In order to manage their cash flow effectively they will need to calculate their average monthly net income. As this is variable, they should monitor their expenditure in detail, by keeping a record of how much they spend in specific areas and ensuring that at the beginning of each month they transfer the required amount into a "household budget account". Whatever is left over is their disposable income.

Another fundamental of any financial plan is that of a cash reserve, an account that can be accessed at short notice to cater for any emergencies or opportunities that may arise. An amount equal to three months' expenditure is recommended, although some people may feel this is insufficient, depending on circumstances.

Sharon has already opened a Postal Account to house her cash reserve. These are ideal for cash reserves and for holding money for short-term objectives.

Some of the best rates available on instant access accounts include Safeway Bank (yes, the supermarket!), which is offering 7.4 per cent gross interest on balances in excess of £2,500, and Northern Rock, offering 7.85 per cent on deposits of over £10,000.

Once Sharon knows her current financial position is in order, she should consider medium- to long-term issues, including protection, retirement and investment objectives.

Protection is important particularly because Sharon and Andy have just taken on a mortgage. Whilst their mortgage has been protected against death, they need to consider protection in the event of long-term illness or disability.

The main form of "disability insurance", Permanent Health Insurance (PHI), pays out a tax-free monthly income in the event of the insured being unable to work through almost any accident or illness.

Increasing demand, as insurers see a rise in claims over the coming years, means premiums are likely to rise. So it is important to choose a provider who guarantees to keep premiums

level throughout the life of the plan, such as Canada Life, Zurich Life or Swiss Life.

Although Sharon is only 24, she should also consider retirement planning. She is a member of BA's pension scheme. By the scheme's retirement age of 55 (for cabin crew) she will have accrued a gross annual pension of approximately 56 per cent of her basic salary.

Sharon should therefore be looking to boost her pension income through Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs), either through her employer or through a private arrangement. In-house AVCs can be beneficial in that the employer may match contributions and/or pay some of the attached charges. But a

Free-Standing arrangement provides choice and flexibility.

Sharon is currently paying AVCs with British Airways but should consider her options fully when deciding to increase these.

If she were to effect a Free-Standing arrangement she should consider a provider who will allow the flexibility to vary contributions without heavy penalties, for example if she were to take time out to start a family.

Leading providers of such flexible plans include Scottish Widows and Commercial Union. Andy, being self-employed, has a Personal Pension Plan with Friends Provident.

Sharon's main interest is rebuilding her savings. She is considering investing in another

PEP for the current tax year, which is also the last that PEPs will be sold, and is prepared to take a higher than average risk with her long-term savings.

Sharon may therefore wish to consider funds that invest in Europe or even maximising the 25 per cent of her PEP allowance which can be invested outside the EC.

An ideal PEP for this purpose is the Skandia MultiPep, which offers access to 75 funds through 17 different fund managers across all sectors of the market.

With the MultiPep, one can switch between funds at very little cost, thereby giving greater investment flexibility and control over the longer term. However, the annual management

fee incurred on the MultiPep is high, involving both a fee to Skandia and a separate one to the fund manager, totalling an average of 2.5 per cent a year. If a MultiPep were to be used, it should be accompanied by regular reviews to determine the need for switching from one fund to another. Otherwise the extra costs might outweigh the benefits of flexibility.

If you are interested in having a free financial makeover, please write to Andy Verity, Free Financial Makeover, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5DL. You must be willing for your picture and financial details to appear in the paper.

## UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT/SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

The Product: Scottish Life Secure Investment Portfolio

The Deal: Scottish Life, the Edinburgh-based insurer, is offering an offshore investment bond through its Isle of Man subsidiary.

The bond can be divided into 100 individual policies for ease of enactment, with minimum investments per policy of £500. However, the minimum initial investment is £1,000.

The bond invests in a range of tracker funds, including Japan, where it is linked to the performance of the Nikkei 225 index, the UK and the US share indexes. There is also a cash fund investing in offshore deposit accounts.

Investors can define the extent of risk they are prepared to accept, limiting losses in any one quarter to between 1 and 5 per cent of capital invested.

They can also define the proportion of their investment in each fund.

Cash withdrawals of 5 per cent or less are not considered as income and can be made free of tax.

Withdrawals of up to 10 per cent of capital may be made without penalty from Scottish Life.

Switches may be made between funds without capital gains liabilities.

Annual loyalty bonuses of 1 per cent are attached to the investment after the fifth year.

Plus Points: This is a more sophisticated variant of typical offshore investment bonds. It offers a range of bells and whistles that may make it attractive to sophisticated investors and those with specific financial planning needs that require them to place a proportion of their funds offshore for the time being.

The investment grows free of tax, which is only paid at full encashment. The capital protection, which guarantees the original sum invested, plus the absence of a time limit on the

investment, mean that it is possible to wait for a good moment to sell up, rather than have a forced maturity of the investment.

Drawbacks and Risks: The charges are extremely heavy — 8 per cent of the fund's value, deducted monthly over the first five years of the investment, plus a further 1.25 per cent annual management charge, and potential penalties for early encashment.

For most investors, this type of fund is slightly over the top. Guarantees of this sort are available onshore, with PEPability (and future ISAbility) on sums of £5,000-£6,000 a year, more than enough for most needs.

Marks out of Five: Four for clever design, two for charges and meeting typical financial needs.

— Nic Cicutti

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Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

# Focus in on vintage prints before they fade from view

**Collect to Invest:**  
Museums and Americans are snapping up classic photographs, warns John Windsor

It may seem an unlikely comparison, but vintage photographs are a bit like Italian primitive paintings. There was a time when such paintings could be collected in armfuls. Then they were all gone.

The international market for photographs is still young, dating only from the mid Seventies. But scarce prints are fast disappearing into museums and the collections of rich Americans. The last chance to snap them up is now.

The blockbuster prices are for 20th century photographs. Collect historic 19th century prints if you must. But twentieth century prices are rising fastest and the market's preferences for names and images have not altered much over the past few years.

This makes investment simpler – although the range of quality, from numbered and signed "lifetime" editions to "later printings", run off by goodness knows whom, goodness knows when, is a perpetual nightmare for those lacking an eye for the subtleties of tone.

Front runners price-wise, are Steiglitz, Kertész and Man Ray.

The American Alfred Steiglitz (1864-1946) pioneered a direct, truthful "pure photography" and set standards of technical excellence, especially in portraiture. His portrait of the hands of his companion and inspiration, Georgia O'Keeffe – one of nine known prints, seven in museums and one in private hands – set a world record for a photograph of \$398,500 (£250,000) at Christie's New York that has lasted since 1993.

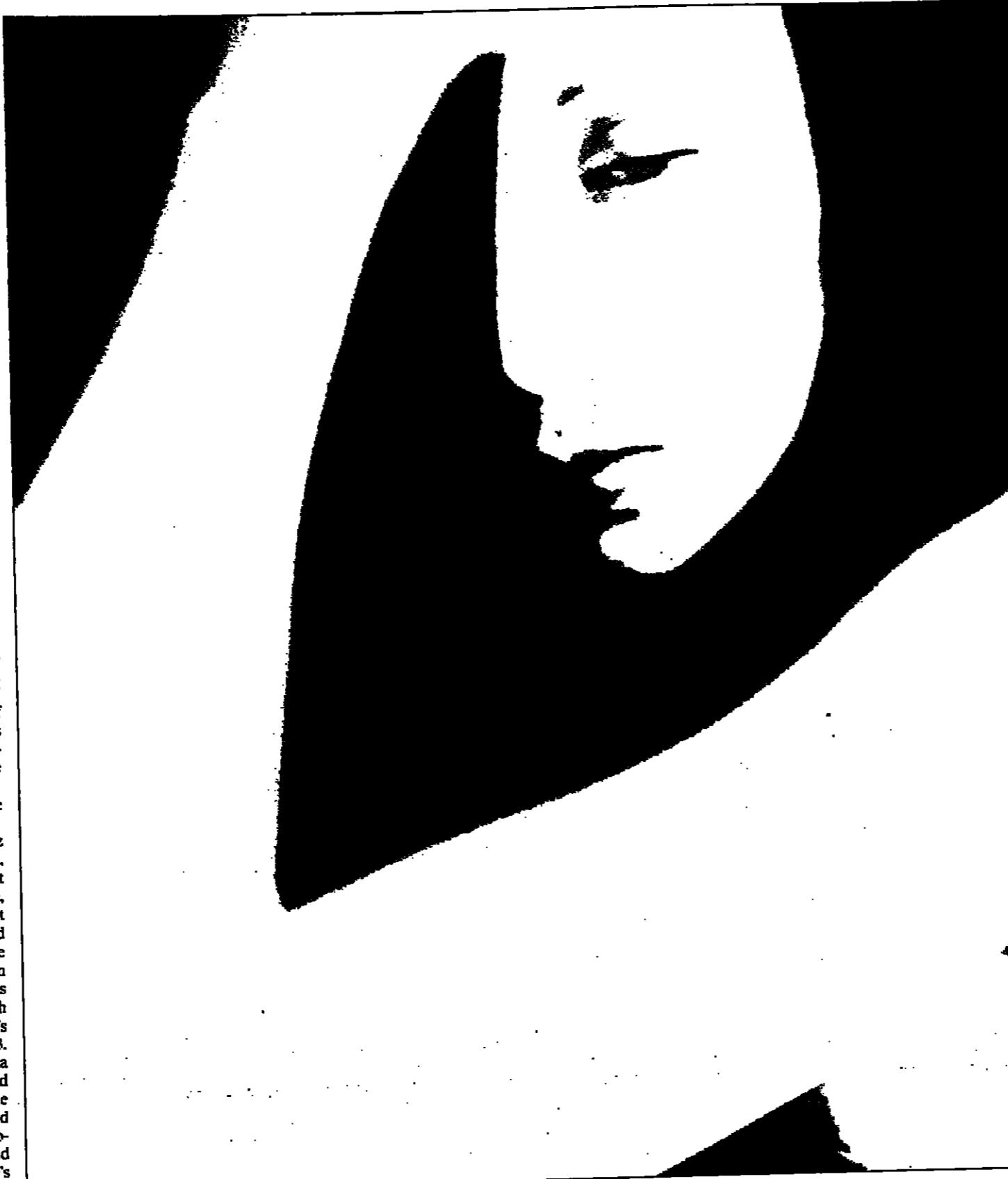
André Kertész (1894-1985), a Hungarian, emigrated to the United States in the Thirties, where he photographed for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Last year his photograph of Mondrian's pipe and glasses fetched \$376,500 at Christie's New York.

Five of the top 10 auction prices for photographs are for the work of the American Man Ray (1890-1976), who lived among the surrealists of Paris for most of his life.

There is solid demand for these top three, whose work is sold almost exclusively in New York. Even the second string – Edward Weston, Alexander Rodchenko and Edward Steichen – can fetch over \$100,000.

Buyers in London should consider the favourite images of Bill Brandt (1904-1983), who was briefly Man Ray's assistant and went on to document British life with a surreal eye. There is a rising demand for characteristic images of his, such as his untitled nude of 1952.

One "printed later" is estimated £2,000-£3,000 in Sotheby's London sale next Thursday (10.30am). Another later printing of the same image made \$2,860 (£1,790) at Christie's New York in 1990. In 1986, Sotheby's sold one of un-



specified printing for a mere £770.

Nobody knows how many copies of the nude were printed. They are hardy perennials at auction, but repeated exposure seems to be making them more and more famous and boosting their value.

The same investment principle applies to other well-known images, such as Brandt's picture of a disgruntled parlour maid and under-parlourmaid about to serve dinner in 1933, which sells for around £5,000, and the legendary French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson's portrait, Rue Mouffetard, showing a boy proudly carrying home two bottles of wine, in Paris in 1958, worth around £3,500.

Few 19th century images have acquired such a valuable cachet. Among the exceptions is Robert Howlett's stunning portrait of Brunel standing in front of the launching chains of the Great Eastern in 1857.

Sotheby's expects £1,000-£1,500 for a copy in Thursday's sale. The print lacks tonal range. The astonishing £22,000 paid for the same image in 1987 demonstrates the importance of condition.

The numbering and signing of editions may seem to be a reliable way of determining rarity value. But Sotheby's expects only £400-£600 for one of an edition of 10 signed prints of Bob Carlos Clarke's fetishistic nude "Nadia/Black Rope" (1991), whereas Robert Frank's "Chicago" (1955-57) – not a limited edition but known to be a rarity – is estimated £3,000-£5,000.

Sotheby's photographs, Thursday (10.30am), 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-293 5000). Christie's South Kensington, fine and rare photographs, Friday (11am), 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (0171-581 7611).

**Good exposure:**  
No one knows how many copies of Bill Brandt's 1952 untitled nude (above) were printed, but the more they appear at auction the more the value rises. The print of Brunel in 1857 (right) is estimated £1,500. A better quality print sold in 1987 for £22,000.



## INTERNET INVESTOR

Cut out the paperwork on your bank accounts and tax returns

ROBIN AMLÖT

Prior to Gordon Brown's March Budget, capital gains tax (CGT) was a fiendishly complicated, expensive to operate tax which raised only a few hundred million pounds for the Inland Revenue and only affected a small proportion of the population.

Following the Budget reform of CGT, it is still a fiendishly complicated, expensive to operate tax which raises only a few hundred million pounds for the Inland Revenue and only affects a small proportion of the population.

If you don't believe me about how complicated CGT has become, ask an accountant. Last month, a meeting of tax experts, accountants and city fund managers concluded that the Finance Bill's proposals make CGT so complex that it would be impossible to write software capable of calculating tax liabilities!

As taxpayers, we can only hope that the confusion the Chancellor has succeeded in creating is resolved as soon as possible. However, it is not a problem most of us will have to worry about. The "joys" of the self-assessment tax return provide enough headaches.

Help with your tax return is one of the facilities available in Microsoft Money 98 Financial Suite, which is locked in battle with Intuit's Quicken for supremacy in the personal financial management field. Money's Tax Estimator will help you to prepare for submitting your tax return.

Money 98 has an online facility which you can access directly through the program and includes Money Manager, a database of articles and information about personal finance.

It may be difficult for most consumers to choose between Money 98 and its competitor from Intuit. Quicken, when deciding which software to use to manage their finances. However, one group of computer users does not have this problem – those artistic types who use Apple Macintosh computers since neither program will run on the Mac operating system.

One area in which Microsoft's program appears to be setting the pace over Quicken is in online banking. Barclays Bank, Nationwide Building Society and Royal Bank

of Scotland have all developed online banking systems based on Microsoft Money 98.

In addition, NatWest Bank's online banking service, which goes live later this year, will also work with Microsoft Money and Royal Bank has launched a complete PC banking and money management package specifically designed for small businesses, Royal Account Master, which is linked to Money 98.

A recent survey by NOP for Barclays Bank showed that more than a third of us with computers at home spend more time in front of the PC than the TV, which leads me to the inescapable conclusion that we all need to get out more.

However, Barclays does claim to be adding 5,000 customers every month to its PC Banking service. Set up in April 1997, in its first year of operation Barclays' PC Banking gained 43,500 customers. Nationwide claims 50,000 customers for its own online service.

In fact, personal financial management at the basic level of organising one's own bank account is likely to be one of the big selling factors in getting more people into computer stores and on to the internet over the course of the next couple of years. Barclays' survey shows 82 per cent of people believing that banking via a PC will become increasingly popular in the future.

For example, the new bank Alliance & Leicester, after a year-long pilot scheme, will shortly follow Co-op Bank and offer all its customers the option of an online facility. Lloyds TSB is also working on an online facility and asking customers to register their interest in taking part in its trials on the bank's website.

The phrase "high street bank" has already had something of a hollow ring for much of the 1990s with all the big institutions cutting staff numbers, closing branches and reducing their street presence. The current rush to offer online services could sound its death knell. What should replace it? "E-street bank?"

**Microsoft:** [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)  
**Lloyds Bank:** [www.lloydsbank.co.uk](http://www.lloydsbank.co.uk)  
**Alliance & Leicester:** [www.alliance-leicester.co.uk](http://www.alliance-leicester.co.uk)

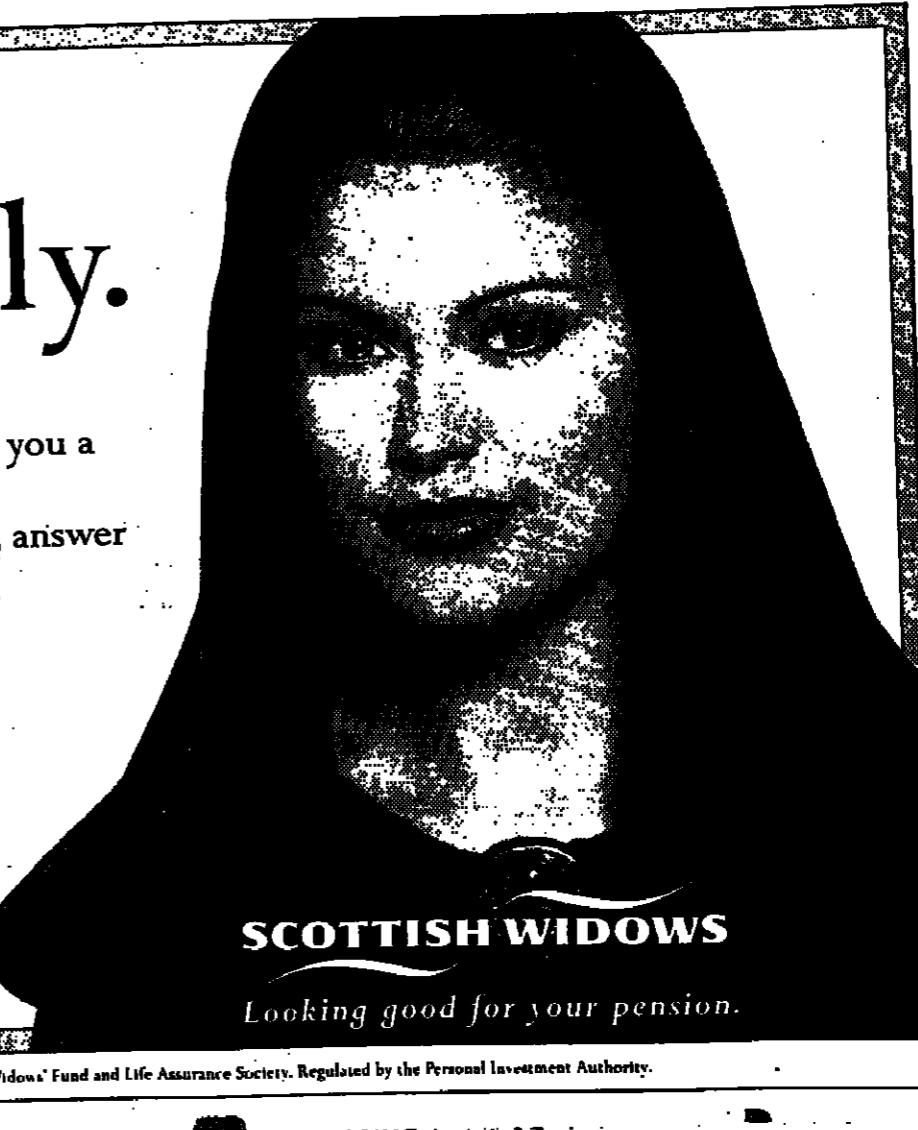
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## A reversal of fortunes for managed funds



THE  
JONATHAN  
DAVIS  
COLUMN

Unit trusts now outsell them by a large margin and money is actually flowing out of the sector. So could it be time for a revival of investment trusts?

Is the tide in the troubled investment trust sector at last starting to turn? It seems a good moment to ask the question, as it is now four years since the sector peaked in an orgy of new issues and some rather wild claims that trusts had solved their discount problem once and for all.

As so often happens, the launch of the most successful new issues ever seen marked the exact high point in the market. Since then, discounts have widened, the investment trust

sector has fallen out of favour and the optimists have deserted the field in favour of the professional Cassandra predicting – as they have done so often before – the final demise of this venerable institution.

Two statistics measure the sector's fall from favour. One is

that, rather than flowing in, money actually flowed out of the sector for the first time in several years. The second was that unit trusts had their best ever year, outselling investment trusts by a large margin.

The other big irony is that while it was the unit trust business which experienced the worst fund management scandal of recent years (the Peter Young débâcle at Morgan Grenfell European in 1996, who managed to cost his employers more than £300m in compensation to aggrieved investors), it is the investment trust sector which finds itself at the centre of the corporate governance and/or investment protection debate.

The wave of restructuring, fund manager changes and unitisations which has swept through the investment trust industry in the last year is a testament to the power that shareholders can wield over underperforming fund management groups. Yet who can remember the last time that anyone was able to persuade a lacklustre unit trust group into changing its ways? Shareholder power may not have amounted to much in the past, as far as investment trusts were concerned, but they do at least have some of it.

So can the sector win back the ground it has lost? Peter Walls, the Crédit Lyonnais analyst, is one who thinks that it may be possible to see better times ahead.

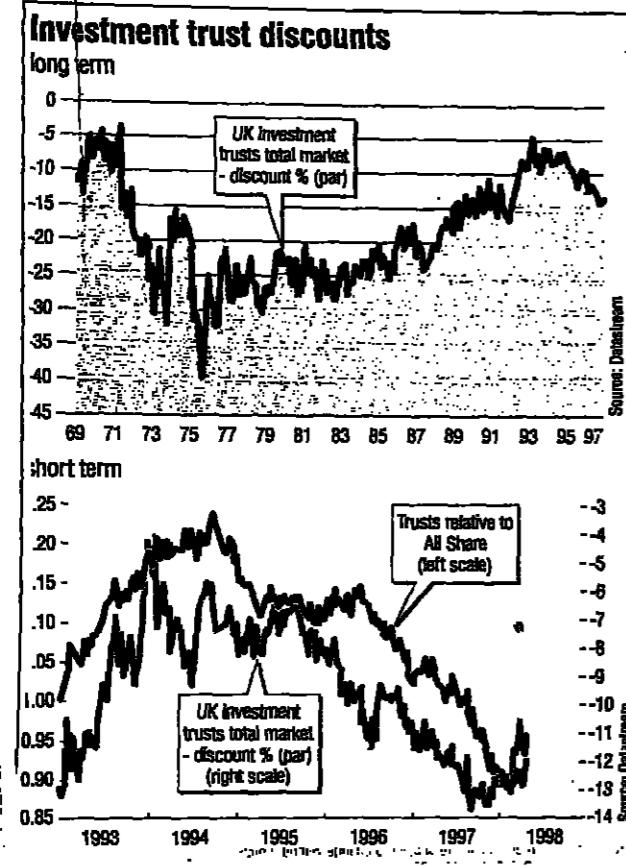
Given that he was one of the first to warn that the good times of 1992 to 1994 could not last, his view that improvement may be on the way deserves notice. He is right to point out that investment trusts have many other things going for them – lower costs, and greater flexibility to name but two – if only the fund manager groups can get their act together and recognise the real demand for change in the way they operate.

All the main groups are now

jumping on the shareholder-



Market madness: Peter Young cost his employers more than £300m



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value bandwagon and are moving to end the most obvious abuses, such as multi-year management contracts and trust boards that are packed with place men.

The Chancellor's abolition of advance corporation tax (ACT) in last year's Budget may ironically be a godsend to the investment trust industry, as it makes it much easier to organise tax-efficient buy-back schemes which Mr Walls and others see as typical mechanisms for eliminating the discount and volatility which is the sector's Achilles' heel in marketing terms.

The value of share buy-backs is that they should put a

floor under the average investment trust discount. Discounts have already narrowed slightly from their low point last year, and Mr Walls believes there is scope for the average discounts to fall to around 8 to 9 per cent.

That will be a disappointment to bargain hunters, who see discounts as a buying opportunity rather than an inherent defect of investment trusts, but it should do something at least to level the competitive playing field against the all-conquering unit trusts.

Unit trusts have many virtues, but it remains a mystery why they can get away with charging quite so much more

than investment trusts – both in up-front costs and annual management fees – and still wipe the floor with the competition.

Selling commissions to intermediaries is clearly one reason, and it is interesting to note that Rod Birkett, who runs Fleming Trust Management, argues that investment trusts should raise their fees to allow them to pay commissions to independent financial advisers and other intermediaries. That is a brave idea, but my sense is that growing consumer awareness will eventually lead investors to start seeing the attractions of investment trusts once more.

When this series started last September, the Footsie stood at 4,362.7 compared with 5,928.3 at the close of business on Thursday night. Towards the end of October, while *Understanding the Stock Market* was exploring the reasons why share prices fluctuate, the London market was in a state of shock.

A couple of days previously, the Footsie had suffered its largest fall in five years, closing at 4,991.5. The cause was a spectacular fall in the Hong Kong market. There was no stock exchange in the world that did not suffer from the shockwaves originating in the Far East.

This demonstrates why investing in shares is not for the faint-hearted. If you suffer a sleepless night every time there is a hiccup in the market, shares are not for you. But many fortunes have been made shares.

Take the case of Gladys Holm, a secretary in Chicago who never earned more than £9,000 a year. When she died, aged 86, she left £12m to a children's hospital. She had amassed her fortune from astute share investment. But fortunes have also been lost in shares. So, why invest if there is the possibility of losing money? The simple reason is that, historically, in the long term, shares have outperformed investing in savings accounts.

This is not to decry such accounts, which must form the basis of every investor's strategy. No one should ever contemplate investing in the stock market if they then would not have a comfort level of savings. The exact amount depends on individual circumstances. However, as a quick rule of

thumb, the minimum should be at least six months' expenditure. It is also essential to review your attitude towards risk and evaluate the level of funds that you want to invest in the stock market. If you have a sizeable lump sum, seek guidance from a broker. However, if you will be investing surplus funds as and when they arise, you can turn your investment into a pastime.

It is important to remember that it is not a game. Any investment in shares must be viewed as a medium to long-term investment – this means for at least five years. Of course, changes in one company's circumstances may make switching to another with better prospects worthwhile. But generally, it is only over time that investments will absorb dealing costs. Hiccups in the market also tend to have less impact the longer the investment is held.

The second point is to spread your risk. Opinions differ as to the ideal number of companies in which a private investor should hold shares. Some say 10, others as many as 20. ProShare's chief, Gill Nott, recommends: "As a very general rule, you should aim to have shares of at least six different companies in your portfolio at any one time. It is wise to buy shares in a number of different companies in different sectors, so if one share or sector performs badly, this will be balanced by the performance of the others."

The third point to remember is that share investment is not an end in itself. Keep abreast of the financial news and monitor the progress of your shares. If you become a real enthusiast, you may decide to keep files of cuttings not only in those companies in which you have investments, but those in which you are considering investing.

Finally, keep records. Retain contact notes, dividend tax vouchers and the other details you will need to complete your tax returns. Following the stock market can be an absorbing and profitable pastime. Hopefully, it will be so for you.

### UNDERSTANDING THE STOCK MARKET

## Take stocks for the long term

In the last column in this series, John Andrew summaries the main factors to examine when investing in shares

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It is also essential to review your attitude towards risk and evaluate the level of funds that you want to invest in the stock market.

If you have a sizeable lump sum, seek guidance from a broker. However, if you will be investing surplus funds as and when they arise, you can turn your investment into a pastime.

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# Eliminate rogue figures from the pension hunt

In theory, charges on life and pension products can be checked exactly. But even the experts can still be confused. Janet Walford has a cautionary tale

For the last three years, following a change in the regulations, it has been possible for consumers to check exactly what insurance companies are charging for their life and pensions products.

That's the theory at least, but it is no easy task for the layman. In fact, even the experts are sometimes hoodwinked by the less venerable practices of some insurance companies.

*Money Management* magazine, which carries in-depth surveys of complex financial products, aims to make comparisons of charges and performance an easy task. In compiling tables on charges and performance, it relies to a large extent on the veracity of the participants.

The magazine is used to spotting rogue figures that crop up now and then. But its best endeavours can be made useless when faced with cynical manipulation of its surveys by some companies, which choose to ignore instructions about what should be taken into account when compiling figures for the surveys.

For example, a recent *Money Management* survey compared the cost of flexibility on personal pensions. Its purpose was to show what happened when someone took out a 25-year personal pension, in all good faith, but finds that his circumstances subsequently change unexpectedly, forcing him to revise his original intentions -

which is exactly what happens to many people in real life.

In the survey, companies were asked for figures showing what would happen to this 25-year personal pension where contributions of £100 per month were stopped after two years and the £2,400 paid in was left invested until the original maturity date.

Allied Dunbar, a life insurance company, provided a figure of £13,388, which placed it firmly in the top quarter of the 45 participants. The magazine carefully checked this figure before it went to print, as Allied Dunbar is known to be particularly competitive in this sort of scenario. The effect of charges is shown in the "key features" document which every company must send you when you buy, for example, a personal pension.

Provided you ask for a quotation for exactly the same thing, you should get figures that allow you to compare charges on an equal basis. The effect of charges is shown in the "key features" document which every company must send you when you buy, for example, a personal pension.

But when insurance companies take part in published surveys they are aware that their figures will be compared with many other product providers, not just two or three, and that the results will be read not only by professional advisers and consumers but by the national press and the regulators too. So appearing well in them can mean a lot.

Sometimes the wording in questionnaires sent to product providers by various enquirers leaves a lot to be desired and the insurance companies have to spend a lot of time trying to interpret what is required. This survey, however, was tightly worded and certainly left no

exhausted. The correct figure would have put Allied Dunbar firmly at the bottom of the table of 45 companies.

This just goes to show how difficult it can be to make comparisons between products. If you are thinking of buying a personal pension, you should always get quotes from two or three companies to allow you to make a comparison (or, better still, get an independent adviser to do it for you).

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Sometimes the wording in questionnaires sent to product providers by various enquirers leaves a lot to be desired and the insurance companies have to spend a lot of time trying to interpret what is required. This survey, however, was tightly worded and certainly left no

doubt in the minds of the other 44 participants.

The worrying point of this whole sorry saga is that if policies were less complex in the first place people would not be so constantly on their guard against getting wrong or misleading information. Nowadays, all pension plans claim to be flexible - but too many of them only allow flexibility at huge cost.

All too often this is not made clear by the company's sales representative at the outset. In most cases, policies sold by the direct salesforce of an insurance company cost more than those brought through an independent adviser or direct by telephone.

Allied Dunbar, like many other insurance companies, sells its products mainly through its own 4,000-strong salesforce. Such salespeople can only tell you about their own products and will obviously want to show them in the best possible light to persuade you to buy.

The moral of this story is clear - if you are considering buying a personal pension plan, and you think that your circumstances may change in the future, you need to ask the salesman more than just whether the plan is flexible. The answer to that simple question will most likely be yes. What you also need to ask is: "What is the cost of this flexibility?" Forgetting to ask that question could end in costing you dear - over £13,000 in the case of Allied Dunbar.

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Janet Walford is editor of 'Money Management' magazine



The devil's in the details: Asking the right questions can save a lot of money over the long term

## Key features - the full monty

Or disclosure could be improved

The last four columns assume investment growth of 9% a year.

### The early years

WARNING - If you transfer in the early years, the value of your fund could be less than what you have paid in. Our latest pension figures indicate that 25% of our planholders stop paying premiums by year 3.

At end of year	Total paid in to date	Growth of total paid in, if there were no charges	Effect of deductions to date	What the transfer value might be	Rate of return with that value
1	2,400	2,510	1,190	66.8%	+6.6%
2	4,800	5,250	1,820	8,430	+28.9%
3	7,200	8,240	2,080	8,228	+0.5%
4	9,600	11,500	2,300	9,200	-2.0%
5	12,000	15,040	2,740	12,300	-9.1%

### The later years

10 24,000 38,170 6,400 31,900 +5.5%

15 36,000 73,800 12,000 61,800 +6.5%

### What are the deductions for?

The deductions reflect a 5% initial charge on payments in, and a 1.6% annual charge on the accumulated funds. There is also a 24-a month policy fee, which increases with inflation.

The columns indicate how invested premiums are reduced by these deductions to some transfer values. The deductions also bring the investment growth used from 9% a year down to negative returns in the early years, when transfer values are less than payments in. At year 5 the deductions bring growth down from 9% to 1% a year. Thereafter the projected % returns steadily increase.

## Illustration of projected returns and ABC ratings

15 year plans, premiums £200 per month, investment growth 9% pa

Company	Transfer/Maturity values at:	Rates of return at:					ABC ratings
	2 yrs, £	5 yrs, £	15 yrs, £	2 yrs, %	5 yrs, %	15 yrs, %	
Virgin	6,147	14,488	67,474	5.8	7.4	8.0	A++A++
Equitable	5,048	13,347	68,358	4.9	7.1	8.1	A+++A++
Standard Life	4,834	13,123	61,540	3.3	3.5	3.6	ABC
Nat West	3,803	12,419	62,358	2.5	1.3	7.1	BBB
Norwich Union	3,380	12,080	63,057	30.0	0.0	7.2	BBB
Allied Dunbar	2,885	11,768	64,283	41.4	0.7	7.3	CCC
J Rothschild	2,784	11,349	60,560	43.7	2.1	6.5	CCC
Black Horse	2,547	11,348	60,540	49.5	1.0	6.5	CCC

## Come to terms with

Confused? That could be the aim of some pension providers' literature. Nic Cicutti cuts through the jargon

Getting to grips with financial products means wading through reams of incomprehensible gobbledegook. It is hard not to conclude that much of the language is deliberately employed to baffle policyholders: typically, they only learn the true meaning of certain terms when the clauses containing them are used against them.

Here is a hasty guide to explain some of the jargon that appears in these two pages and when discussing common financial products.

**Capital or initial units:** When you invest in a policy, the money typically buys units which rise and fall according to investment performance. The "initial", or misleadingly named "capital", units are those that apply in the first year or two of a policy being

taken out. They involve higher charges of up to 5 or 6 per cent a year. No matter how long you keep a policy going and how low charges may fall on subsequent years' units, they will continue to remain high on those first units.

**With-profits policies:** This is where an annual bonus is attached to a policy and cannot be taken away. At maturity, a "terminal" bonus is also attached, which can form up to 60 per cent of the entire policy's final value. The aim of this strategy is to "smooth" stock market ups and downs.

**Unit-linked policies:** These match direct stock market performance more closely. They may deliver higher performance but also involve investors taking more risks in the short term.

**Disclosure regime:** In 1995, companies were forced for the first time to provide their clients with details of how much would be taken out of a policy in charges, including commission, and what the effect of this would be on the value of the policy at certain key moments in its life. Disclosure is supposed to be policed by the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), the financial watchdog. But the

regime has come under increasing fire for being confusing and for failing to ensure the companies cut some of the more outrageous charges.

**Transfer or surrender value:** If you halt contributions into a personal pension you cannot ask for the money back. A transfer, therefore, is when you decide to switch a policy from one provider to another and it involves the original provider setting a "value" on the amount you can move over. This transfer value is affected by last minute company charges, which may be hefty.

Surrenders, on the other hand, are possible for policies such as with-profits endowments that are linked to mortgages. Again, the amount paid at the moment of surrender is likely to be affected by heavy initial charges. It is also likely to be low because very little maturity value is attached to it.

**Generally, if it must be disposed of, as long as a policy has been held for more than seven years it makes sense to sell it instead of surrendering it. There are several companies specialising in this market.**

**Paid-up value:** If you cannot

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Virgin Direct £13.13	Virgin Direct £16.96
Marks & Spencer £13.65	Marks & Spencer £22.55

Women (non-smokers) £100,000 guaranteed cover 25 year term

Age 30*	Age 35*
EAGLE STAR £8.55	EAGLE STAR £11.41
Virgin Direct £9.26	Virgin Direct £12.83
Direct Line £9.75	Direct Line £13.00
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# How to avoid hidden charges

The current disclosure regime has failed to protect consumers. John Chapman explains how some simple changes could work

High-charging and poor-value pension plans and endowments are still being sold in their hundreds of thousands to the unknowing British public. A third of pension plan holders make losses or very poor returns on these vital savings.

The industry runs up almost unlimited costs in competing to sell policies, which are then passed on to plan holders through a variety of charges. The Consumers' Association has referred to the "euphemisms and obscure language used to disguise charges".

The industry itself agrees. A leading pensions handbook refers to the use of "capital" or "initial units", present in a quarter of pension plans, as invidious, as "the only reason for having them is so the plan holder will not realise what the charges are".

Yet the watchdog supposedly there to oversee the industry takes a far later approach. In its recent report on product charges, the Personal Investment Authority (PIA) merely describes them as "many, different and subtle".

The charges scams were meant to end with the so-called "disclosure regime" introduced in 1995. This involved companies being forced to tell consumers how much was being taken in commission and other fees from the plans they were selling. But the impact of this new regime has been very limited.

All the PIA can report is a marginal improvement in early "transfer or surrender values". These are the terms given to describe the value of a product - such as a pension or an endowment - at the moment when it is switched from one company or another, or when a punter tries to cash it in. An improvement in these values would mean customers were getting a better deal.

Yet the PIA's claim that it may be responsible for this better deal is open to question.

In fact, research shows that trend began earlier, with the publication of a report on surrender values by the Office of Fair Trading claim at least a year earlier.

In practice, the costly disclosure regime that is now in place has failed. Clients are still uninformed about which are low-charge and high-charge products. The problem lies with the "key features" document - an example of which is shown on this page - handed to all clients at the moment when they buy a policy. This document fails to alert them adequately to the poor value in many policies.

The key features document is difficult to understand and there appears to be no connection between the figures it shows. For example, what is the difference between actual deductions and the effect of deductions? How are the transfer values derived?

Second, the most revealing bits have been censored. There is no indication of the appalling rates of return in the early and, indeed, mid-years of many policies. Instead, the only "projected rate of return" - the amount a plan will be worth - indicated is the most favourable one, at maturity, which only a minority of plan holders reach - a misleading practice indeed.

Third, the health warning about stopping early is half-hearted. No use is made of the poor "persistence rates" which are now known. This term describes the percentage figure of the number of people who let their policies lapse after a few years. On average, about 20 per cent of pension plans lapse by year two and 30 per cent by year three, reflecting poor selling and changes in personal circumstances.

Making things clearer would be easy. It would be possible to do so by subtly changing the key features document already shown, by delivering more information. The introduction of a "growth with no charges"

column to give a logical link between the column is supported by many insurance company actuaries.

Some might argue that consumers might be put off by tables showing they might receive a negative return. They should be. Where high early lapse rates occur, with poor early returns, consumers should realise that they could be the next to lose on their savings.

Even if a key features document were improved in the manner described, it would still be necessary to have a rating system so that consumers know of the good value products.



Cold comfort: Key features documents, brought in by the pension watchdog to make buying a pension easier, have still left many people confused about the value of their savings  
Photograph: John Giles/PA

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... I was flying  
I decided during  
the war I wasn't the cause  
of the war, I suffered with my  
wife and I had a V-1000 every day.  
At the time I was flying  
I was in the RAF. The  
RAF wanted me to buy the  
plane so I came up and I said  
"I'll give you the flight mechanism  
and you can have it for a penny".  
He said "I'll give you a thousand  
pounds". I said "I'll give you a thousand  
pounds and you can have the  
plane".

He just got  
into it. We had  
a gun-marshall  
away, on his way  
to set off from the  
place command  
of the  
army.

مَكْفُوْلَةً مِنَ الْأَصْلِ

# Turning Japanese ...

Road test Honda Civic Aero deck, by James May

At a time when Honda is appearing a little over-conservative, here's a new version of the Civic that doesn't seem wholly Honda. For a start, it smells like a Volvo, which may be a plot, as the Civic Aero deck is intended as a small-scale expression of a niche defined by Volvo with the 850 wagon and by BMW with the 3- and 5-series Tourings – the oxymoronic sports estate.

Honda is quick to assert that the Aero deck's 415-litre load bay (835 litres with the rear seats folded) is "not big" for an estate, but then this is not intended as a load lugger.

It is, rather, a normal luggage capacity reshaped to accommodate skis, snow boards, wind surfers and other paraphernalia of that young and active lifestyle into which the Aero deck is intended to slot. This Civic makes concessions to fashion, not function, so if you want to bump furniture, buy an Asta estate. You wouldn't want to do this in the Civic, if only because the boot

trim is far too nice. Bit radical, hub?

There were three injected engines available at the bad joke-generating 1 April launch: a 1.5, a 1.6 and a 1.8 with VTEC variable valve timing. Prices range from £14,775 to £17,295 for the range-topping 1.8Vti version available

My only beef with the motor is the appearance of a little roughness in the lower reaches. That's not very Honda either. They'll be removing the ceremonial sword from its display case at this rate.

One spin-off from the broad rev range is shortish gear ratios, which gives the Aero deck a slightly frenetic character. It is also, to be frank, not the world's quietest car either. All this conspires to endow the Honda with something of a hairy-arsed nature. Going back to what I said about Honda at the beginning, this is not a criticism.

Anyone weaned on the previous generation Civics will be amazed at the meanness of the new car's controls, and they are at their most appreciable in this fine handler. The steering is heavy in the car-park, but once at speed it conveys with precise Italianate gearshift

and pedals that actually feel connected to something for what the marketing department might term the ultimate in tactile motoring pleasures.

Grip is adequate rather than exceptional, and under power the driven front wheels can get flighty over damp patches, but on a switchback B-road you will never suffer the traditional estate shortcoming of appearing to be at the controls of an ever more pendulous, er, pendulum.

Inevitably, Honda is claiming a whole new market for this car, but then who isn't these days? Nevertheless, there may be something in it. It's quite stylish, fun to drive and reasonably practical to a point just short of the one that tars the owner with an association with self-assembly furniture. Maybe not state of the art, but quite an artful estate, certainly.

## HONDA CIVIC AERO DECK 1.8Vti

Price: £17,295

Engine: 1.797cc, transverse inline four, four valves per cylinder, 165bhp.

Transmission: 5-speed manual. Performance: Top speed 133mph, 0-62mph 8.8secs, mpg 32.1.

### Rivals

Alfa Romeo 145 2.0

Cloverleaf, £16,245. Cording engine and fabulous handling, but not as solidly built as the Honda. Fiat Bravo 2.0 HGT, £15,610. Not very roomy, but deceptively quick and something of a performance bargain.

VW Golf 2.0 GL Estate, £16,065. Surprisingly practical but beginning to feel and look very dated. Not an exciting drive.



GAVIN  
GREEN

The Renault Clio was bought mainly by women, so little wonder that, when it came to conceiving its replacement, Renault turned to a woman. Anne Asensio was one of the senior designers involved in styling the new Clio – on sale in Britain at the end of this month – and she is now responsible for the design of all small- and medium-sized Renault cars. She is reckoned to be the most senior woman in the car industry.

Those keen on furthering the cause of women in the motor industry (and who could deny that it's a good idea?) will point out that Renault probably has the best reputation in Europe – and possibly, the world – for avant-garde car styling, and that Asensio the other hand, could equally point out that Asensio's boss – the overall head of car styling at Renault, Anthony Grade – is English. And his boss – the head of design for the whole of Renault, Patrick Le Quement – is half English. Either way, a recent survey of car-design students showed that Renault is the company that most would like to work for. Its international reputation for conceiving handsome, advanced cars is second to none.

I met Asensio at the international unveiling of the new Clio. We spoke bikes and cars for a bit (she rides a Ducati and has a Porsche) before getting on to one of her pet subjects – how to win over young buyers. "The car industry is doing a poor job at connecting with youngsters," she said. "We're way behind many other industries."

She is seeking inspiration from British youth.

"There is unstructured, informal spontaneity about British youth which intrigues me and which is very contagious. I try to spend as much time as possible wandering places like Camden market, just trying to get a feel for youth culture."

One of the problems facing the car business, as it tries to win over under-30s, is research that suggests that young people behave differently when buying a car to when they buy other products. Cars are obviously expensive, but that can't be the only reason that under-30s tend to be particularly conservative. Says Asensio: "Research suggests that young people want the reassurance of a conventional car. They tend to buy quite plain cars. Cars supposedly aimed particularly at young people, oddly, tend to be bought mainly by older buyers."

The Renault Twingo, not sold in Britain but a big seller in France, is a sub Clio-sized baby that looks cute, has big Fisher Price-type switchgear and wacky seat trim. Renault thought the under-30s would love it. Instead, early buyers were mostly 50-plus. The average age has now dropped a bit, but it is still especially popular with greyhairs. "Older people are more willing to experiment," says Asensio. "They're often more comfortable with themselves and like a bit of fun later in life."

The Ford Ka, marketed at young trendy urbanites, isn't exactly bought by the Zimmer frame set, but the average buyer age (41.6 years) is older than Ford imagined.

The car most overtly targeted at youth – the Smart City Coupe, co-developed by Mercedes and Swatch – hasn't gone on sale yet. Deliveries start at the end of the year – mainland Europe, with UK sales starting probably in 2001. It's a cute two-seater, finished in bright colours with bright cabin trim and boasting lightweight, interchangeable plastic body panels. It's a four-wheeled version of a Swatch watch and is unashamedly aimed at under-30s. Asensio won't comment on its chances of success – she's too diplomatic – but her body language is clear enough. She thinks it won't sell. Nor do I. Young people don't want a car that is youthful in a contrived way, nor one (just as significantly) that costs as much as a roomier, better-performing, "normal" small car.

Really trendy cars, among *The Face* set, seem to be older, classic cars such as certain Merces and various Sixties British cars such as P5 Rover saloons and Triumph Heralds. They're distinctive, cheap, imply a disdain for flashiness (the coolest models have just a touch of rust) and yet look great. They're the motoring equivalent of horn-rimmed specs – the sort of thing your granddad had, but now ultra-cool.

Quite how Renault interprets all this, Asensio would not divulge. A new car inspired by street markets is difficult to imagine (the Renault "Doc Martens" fitted with oversized tyres? The Renault "Soiled Levi's" fitted with ripped upholstery? The Renault "Fake Jewellery" with earrings on the wing mirrors? Replace Nicole with a grunge rocker?).

About the only thing she has ruled out is the use, in Renault dealerships, of barrow-boy salesmen.



## It's on: the hunt for Land Rover enthusiasts

Have you heard the one about the Rolls-Royce-powered Land Rover? Born of an Army project, the only surviving prototype is the fastest Land Rover ever built, painstakingly restored to its 1950 glory by Graham Merricot.

Then there is the 1955 model with no paint, just polished aluminium panels; it gets used every day by its owner, Harold Lowe.

These are just two of thousands of Land Rover stories that show that these vehicles are more than simply transport. They are a way of life that attracts more than its fair share of lovably eccentric owners.

So last Thursday Land Rover UK launched "In Search of a Legend", a nationwide hunt for Land Rovers with inspirational histories. It is all part of Land Rover's 50th anniversary celebrations. Land Rover says it is looking for

James Ruppert reports on a publicity campaign with a difference

Defenders, Range Rovers and Discoverys which embody the spirit of this world famous brand – freedom, adventure, individualism, authenticity, supremacy and guts". And Sir Ranulph Fiennes fronted the launch.

The search is scheduled to run from May to August, with 130 Land Rover dealers across the UK tracking down their own local legend. Dealership winners will go on to compete in one of nine regional competitions. The UK legend will be chosen in September at a national final.

No one understands the attraction of these vehicles better than Carl Rodgerson, editor of *Land Rover Owner International*, the monthly bible of drivers and owners world-wide.

"When it comes to the owners, there is a distinction be-

tween the classic car contingent, who are constantly cleaning and polishing their pride and joy, and Land Rover owners who will almost go out of their way to make their vehicles dirty, such as the Reverend Andrew Stevens.

"I don't actively seek mud but then again, they are not meant to be executive paperweights. I believe in using my Land Rovers as they were intended." That is the Gospel according to the Rev Stevens, who has been a Land Rover enthusiast since his teens.

"For me they are an utter joy to drive. First of all you sit high up and can see the traffic well ahead, and as result drive much more safely and responsibly. It is also a strong, simple and durable structure. The fact that it is old-fashioned I also find reassuring; it requires you to be actively involved in driving it, rather than sitting back and be-

ing cosseted. Also, depreciation isn't an issue.

"My 1955 station wagon, which I use every day, has never dropped in value, while parts and servicing are cheap. Ecologically I think that a well-looked-after Land Rover is a pretty sound way to go motorising, rather than chopping and changing cars every few years."

The Rev Andrew Stevens

certainly knows how to look after his Land Rovers, and enjoys welding his socket set. "I owned a Meccano set as a small boy, which must have helped. It really is a simple vehicle to work on. Getting underneath isn't a problem; the ground clearance is so high there is no need for a ramp."

"I have a 1948 model which I restored 10 years ago. It has aged nicely and has become my recreational vehicle. My everyday 1955 station wagon was ex-RAF and had 12 previous

owners; I estimated that it had covered 200,000 miles.

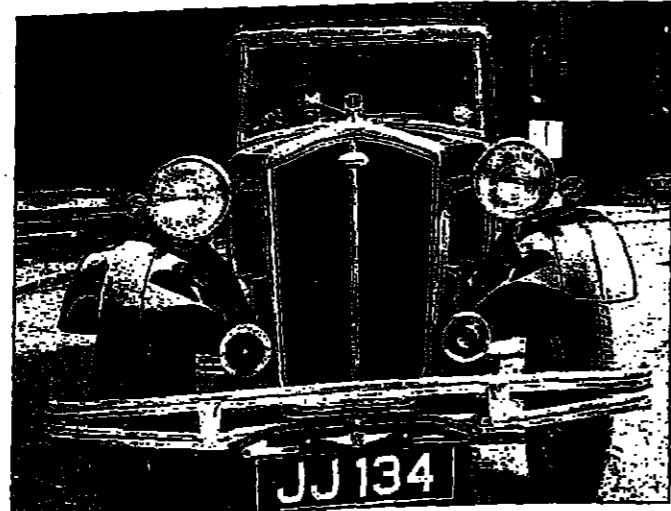
He adds: "When I came to restore it, very few bolts were sheared off. The quality of the original construction and the basic level of technology made it easy to restore. In fact restoration is something I've done twice since 1975, so it should last for the rest of my motoring career."

And would the Reverend ever consider trading up or down to anything else?

"Well, I suppose if my Premium Bond number came up I might be able to persuade my wife to exchange her old Metro for a new Freelander. I rather like the look of those, and the reviews have been very good."

If Andrew Stevens is a typical Land Rover owner, the company won't have to search too hard to find themselves a legend.

## MY WORST CAR: KENNETH WOLSTENHOLME'S WOLSELEY



I never took my driving test; it was suspended during the war, but that wasn't the cause of the mishap I suffered with my first and worst car, a Wolseley 10hp saloon. At the time I was a pilot in the RAF. The opportunity to buy the Wolseley came up and I asked one of the flight mechanics if he'd give it a once-over. That was quite naughty, because it was illegal of me to ask the chap and it was just as wrong for him to do it. We both could have got court-martialled.

Anyway, on his say-so I bought the car. I was due some leave, so I set off from my Bomber Command base in Cambridge to drive to Manchester. Back then it was an exhausting day's drive across country, which meant I'd

probably spend about 10 minutes with my mum before having to turn around and come back. Everything seemed to be going well until I took a sharp left-hand bend. Suddenly there was a lurch and the rear of the car dropped, then slid around wildly as I was overtaken by my rear offside wheel. I watched in horror as it bounced down the road and into a garden, while I and the car ended up in a ditch. All that got damaged was my pride, and

Kenneth Wolstenholme's new book is *'They Think It's All Over'* (Robson Books, £8.99). He was talking to James Ruppert.

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# Widening the Net

The garden fence may be a thing of the past, as you start to swap gossip and useful local information with your neighbours via your PC. By Andrew Mylius

Computers are rapidly becoming a normal item of domestic hardware, with five million Britons able to access the Internet. Next year, the number will be more than eight million.

The virtual landscape of the Net has recently started to deliver functions people – normal ones – actually want. And in so doing, it looks set to change the way we live. Professor Andrew Graham of Balliol College, Oxford, who is researching the subject, says: "There is absolutely no doubt that e-mail will be used by everybody. It will be a normal way to exchange information". But e-mail is merely the tip of the iceberg.

The information and communications technology (ICT) revolution looks set to be slow but steady. A range of easy-to-use applications with the relevance of e-mail still needs to develop. At Microsoft, Ruth Bradshaw says that, having cornered the market in business-sector software, the American megolith is now focusing on the home market.

Amazingly, there has been no systematic research into how people actually use the Net at home, but now an experiment run by Microsoft in Islington, London (being monitored by the Economic and Social Research Council) gives some clues as to how ICT could affect us.

Under the name MSN Street, a community of 23 houses – 60 people – went on-line 12 months ago. People who already worked from home swiftly found the Net improved their business communication. Others started to bring work home.

which meant they had to go to the office less.

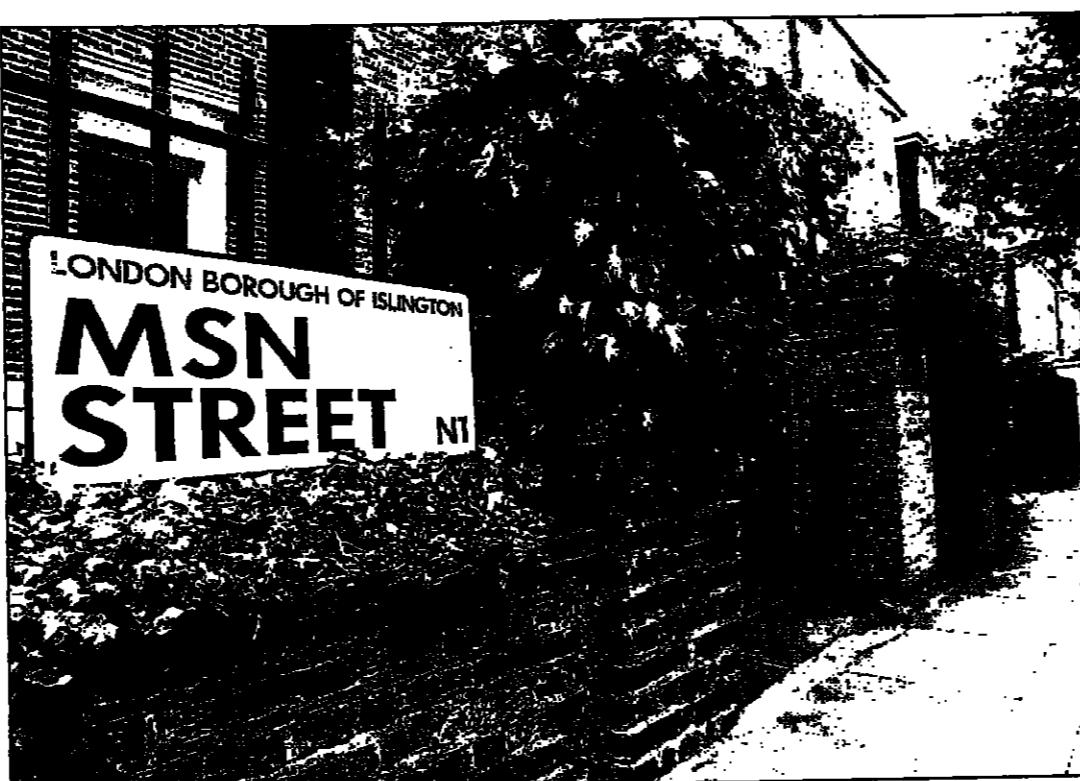
ICT has, like it or not, started to change the ways people work – where they do it, when, and how. However, not everyone wanted a home-office. Microsoft group marketing manager Oliver Roll describes the Internet as "every library in the world, but without an index and without a librarian to help you". Overwhelming.

MSN Street tackled this by creating a local area network that was relevant to the street's residents. The street's virtual bulletin board became a site for neighbours to exchange information about local services, shops and restaurants; people organised babysitting, children asked for help with homework; last year someone urged everybody to catch a glimpse of Hale-Bopp.

Very swiftly, a new social-technological ecology started to emerge. "Sometimes it's taken me years to speak to people", says Janet White, who has lived in the street for 10 years. "They have to give birth or have puppies before you find whatever it is that is going to make you say the first thing."

As a forum for common needs and concerns – for a plumber or reliable window cleaner, a spate of burglars, the route of the Channel Tunnel rail link and a campaign against grey squirrels – the Internet has become a meeting place. "A fear was that people would become withdrawn. They will now come over and talk if I'm in the garden," Pearson Phillips, a resident, remarks.

Integral to the design of Millennium Village is a communal car pool. Maintained by



soon to be mirrored elsewhere, Millennium Village, to be built at Greenwich, will treat IT as a household service and an intrinsic part of the local community. Nick Thompson, director of the Integer (intelligent, green housing) research project, predicts that each home will be a "node" in a global web, but will also be part of a local area network.

This will make it possible not only for people to work from home and set up local business, it could also revolutionise the way care for children and the aged works. Home shopping and delivery could enable far longer independence and by connecting to local clinics and the emergency services ICT will usher in telemedicine and improve household safety.

Integral to the design of Millennium Village is a communal car pool. Maintained by

a company like Hertz, this would enable a dramatic reduction in private car ownership. Additionally, councils or housing associations will be able to communicate with residents about maintenance and repairs, and billing for gas or electricity can be done via a keyboard. (Earlier this month Islington council launched 11 access points to enable residents without PCs access to its services via the Net.)

An idea common to several new developments is a "teleservices centre" – an IT forum that will provide technological back-up, social space and the kinds of hardware that people do not want at home. Design consultant Tony Rowe observes: "One of the problems is technology moves all the time. New technology is always expensive. Organisations that employ a lot of people can afford it."

Individuals, more often than

neighbours in an experiment in north London, a virtual bulletin board has linked people together who previously may not have spoken to each other for years

office and residential use. However, "the majority of people don't like to be isolated in a family house. The idea of a separate study isn't important".

At *Building Homes* magazine, editor David Birkbeck says: "The quiet corner will be the quietest part of the house and I suspect it will be full of light. A house of the future will definitely have a corner of that quality because that's where people will be chained. It's the same in every workspace people gravitate towards the windows. If you want birds, trees, or to watch your kids, you need big windows".

Whether it's for work, play or the day-to-day business of simply having and living in a house, it looks certain we will be getting very much more familiar with computers in the near future. It could be time to find a sunny window, log on, and get to know the neighbours.



PENNY JACKSON

## Can't get no satisfaction?

Imagine you have just been gazumped or your house sale has fallen through and on the way out of the estate agent's office after strong words you find a questionnaire asking how satisfied you are with the service.

Not much chance that unfortunate office is going to be nominated as estate agent of the year. But the 730 estate agents who put themselves forward for this year's competition had more faith in themselves and their clients.

More than 70 per cent of customers said they were delighted with the service they received. For the first time the findings of the beauty contest – the National Association of Estate Agents' "Office of the Year Awards" in association with Nationwide Building Society – have been made public.

Mike Lazebny, of the Nationwide, says there has been a marked improvement in the quality of service around the country "although the improvement was less noticeable among London agents". While 93 per cent of sellers would recommend their agent, only 88 per cent of buyers were entirely happy, which bears out what many agents now feel – that the buyers deserve better.

When it comes to the more complicated world of letting and renting, overall satisfaction is less. But perhaps the true test comes not with a smooth sale but when problems occur and here only 40 per cent gave top marks to their agent, with a tenth only giving one or two points.

The winners who were selected after undercover customers put them through their paces were Black Horse Agencies – Parkinson Fairlie Robertson in Hayling Island, Hampshire for corporate sales; Jones and Redfearn in Rhyl, Denbighshire in independent sales and JSC Lettings, Virginia Water, Surrey in the lettings and management sector.

Frustrated buyers with a million-odd pounds burning a hole in their pockets are resorting to purchasing a place only to knock it down and start again. Houses built in the 1920s and 1930s seem particular targets – spacious with land but out of date. In St George's Hill, Surrey, Knight Frank saw a dated property in 2.5 acres sell for more than £1 million to make way for a "mansion" of 11,000 sq ft.

And emerging from the dust of a farmhouse-style family home in Blackhills, an exclusive private road in Esher, will be another luxury mansion house. On the Crown Estate in Oxshot, nine properties ranging in price from £600,000 to £800,000 were bought purely for plot value.

While in Hampstead, London, Glentree Estates has sold a house for more than £2m to someone who intends to pull it down. It was on the market for two years. Trevor Abraham says the rebuilding may not cost a lot more than major refurbishment since no one knows what they will find. Nor is there, of course, any VAT payable on new build.

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# Waxing luminous

Candles mean warmth and romance, indoors and out, all year round. Rosalind Russell finds some trendy examples to light up your spring

It used to be considered socially naught to light candles for a dinner party. Shades of melon balls, Hyacinth Bucket and suburban pretensions. But now candles are selling by the bale. And although it would be impossible (and probably heretical) to prove, judging by the amount in the shops, more church candles burn in private homes than under ecclesiastical roofs.

The reason could be the diversity of design in candle holders which has seen a recent significant updating of image. And they have grown taller. Almost every major store now stocks floor-standing wrought-iron candelabra as part of a contemporary furnishing collection. Like cream sofas, they're a dinky (double income, no kids) accessory, presenting too much of a challenge to small children and boisterous dogs.

Prices cover most budgets, from chain store to designer label.

Next Home catalogue offers a three-arm floor-standing candelabra 42 inches high, in black or gold for £29.99. It's the same price as Pukka Palace's mail-order tripod candle holder, 50 inches high and wrought in pewter-finish metal and which

can also be wired as a standard lamp.

The Iron Design Company makes two floor-standing models to accompany its range of wrought-iron furniture. Hand-made in a traditional forge in North Yorkshire, the three-candle stand costs £95 and the four-candle stand is £125. The firm accepts commissions, so if your ideas run to something even grander, they will oblige. Like several other designers, they also make a candle-holding chandelier, price £155, which is wildly romantic... in theory.

Unless you are careful to wedge the candles in firmly and upright — and out of a draught — you could end up getting an eyebrow wax as you eat.

You'll also need long arms and a candle snuffer. Pukka Palace's candle chandelier costs £49.95.

A candle in the wind is best shielded by a glass case, which makes glass bell-jar lamps a practical alternative. Pukka Palace does two, both Victorian in style: a clear glass-etched bell jar at £65 and a hand-painted version, sporting pears and bunches of grapes, at £45. Its melon-glass lamps, in green, light blue and dark blue, are just £35 each.

Wireworks, launched six years ago by designer Anna Albright, sells contemporary accessories through stores such as the Conran Shop and Heal's. The range includes a smart candleholder enclosed in a semi-opaque box to diffuse the light (£35.50). Also very pretty are the chrome-stand candle holders with beaded lampshades from Debenhams. They come in white, lilac, gold and dark blue and cost £20.

Cheaper and very cheerful is the Homebase collection of candles and holders which can be used indoors or out. A gar-

den-gate-style chrome lantern with cut-out shapes around the roof and a fence design around the base is just £9.99, or there are cauldron-shaped glass-bowl candles with curly feet at £6.99 each.

If you really don't care what the neighbours think about your taste, you can buy Homebase's garden-gnome candles, dressed in Cool Britannia sunhat and sunglasses (£7.99). Just the gnome for the Dome.

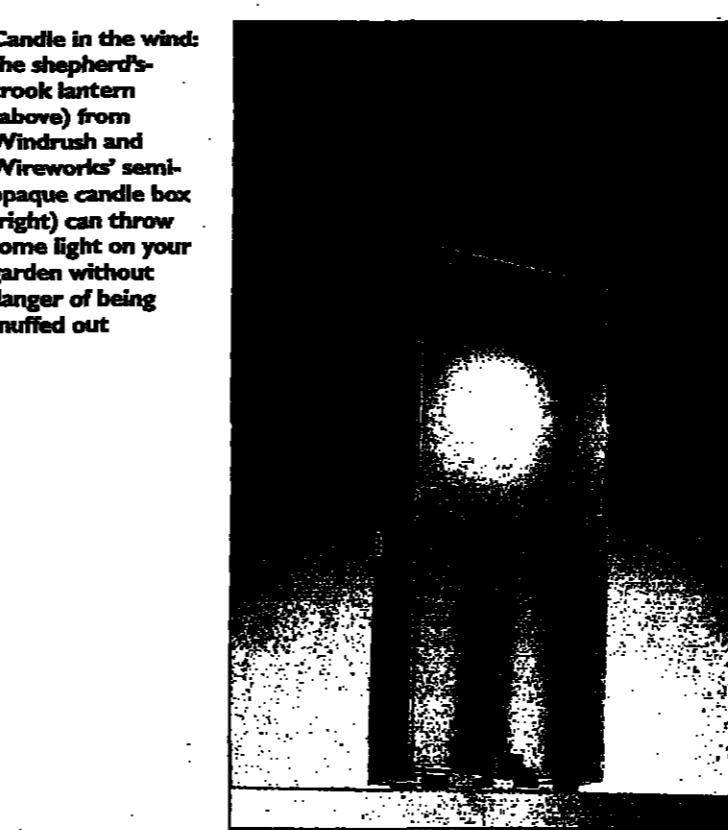
For more understated elegance, the Kint range of candle holders from Ocean is smart enough to be used on the dining table or on a white wall. They are very simple, with the clean appearance of steel and glass and come in four sizes, from wall candle-holder to the 40-inch high garden holder which has a long ground spike.

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Contact: Next Home (0345 100 500); Pukka Palace (0345 666 660); Iron Design Company (01609 778846); Wireworks (0171-724 8856); Debenhams (0171-408 4444); Homebase (0645 801800); Ocean (0800 132 985); Windrush Mill (01993 770456).



Candle in the wind:  
the shepherd's  
crook lantern  
(above) from  
Windrush and  
Wireworks' semi-  
opaque candle box  
(right) can throw  
some light on your  
garden without  
danger of being  
snuffed out



## THREE TO VIEW: WITH SPRING BLOSSOM

Pear Tree Cottage in Colyford, three-and-a-half miles from the sea in Devon, is a two-bedroom thatched house with very large cottage gardens, including a wild garden. Views across the Axe Valley can be seen from the top of the gardens. There is an 18ft sitting room with stone-built inglenook-style fireplace, 12ft kitchen breakfast room and outside, a single garage. The town sits by the River Coly and consists mostly of period houses and cottages like this one. Perfect for a weekend home, there is a rail connection to London via Axminster. £90,000 through Alder King (01297 21595).



Walnut Tree House in Pulborough, West Sussex, really does have a walnut tree in the garden, along with a magnolia, wisteria, winter flowering jasmine and forsythia. The Grade II listed period house is in the centre of the village and has a long driveway at the back, leading to two garages. From the drawing room, there are views across the water meadows to the South Downs. The 18ft kitchen has fitted white units and Whirlpool oven and hob. With five bedrooms, two bathrooms and an old cellar with curved ceiling, it's for sale for £255,000 through Guy Leonard & Co (01798 874033).



Apple Tree Cottage near Castle Combe in Wiltshire has large rear gardens with terraces, lawns and well-established trees. The thatched, stone-built three-bedroom house has two reception rooms, including a marble-floored summer lounge with French doors opening onto the patio. The 23ft drawing room has exposed stone walling and inglenook fireplace. The kitchen is custom built with a Rosières cooking range. The main bathroom is a splendid affair with a generous free-standing oval bath on claw feet and brass telephone taps. All for £350,000 through Parkinson Fairlie Robertson (01249 655101).



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New Homes

New Homes

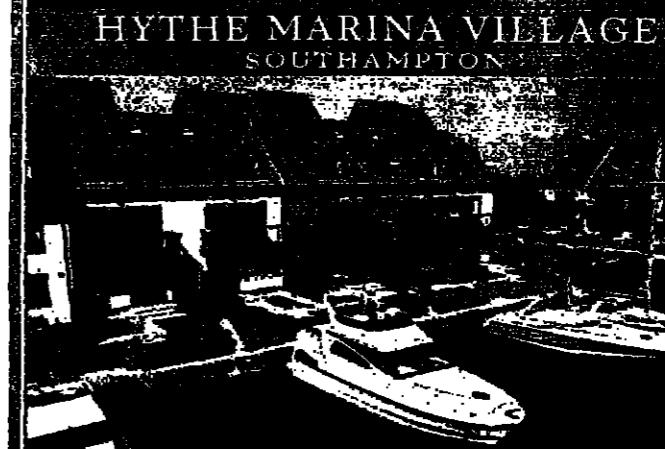
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